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LIVES
OF
EMINENT UNITARIANS.

BY
THE REV. W. TURNER, JUN., M.A.

VOL. II.

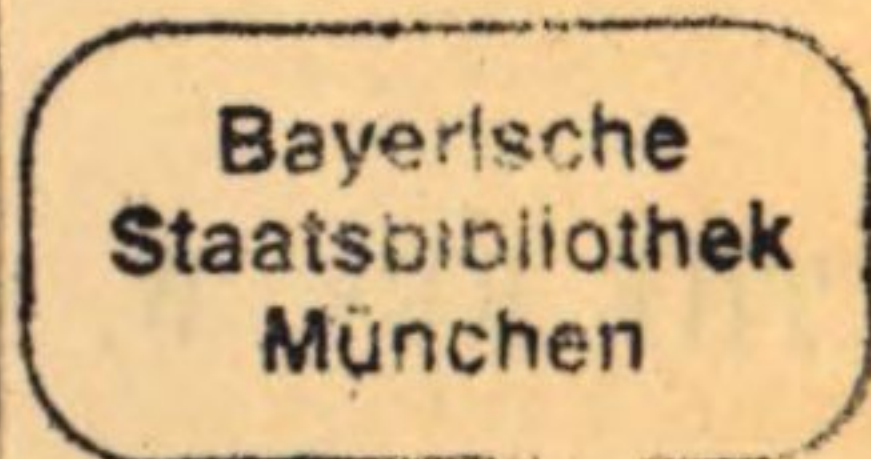
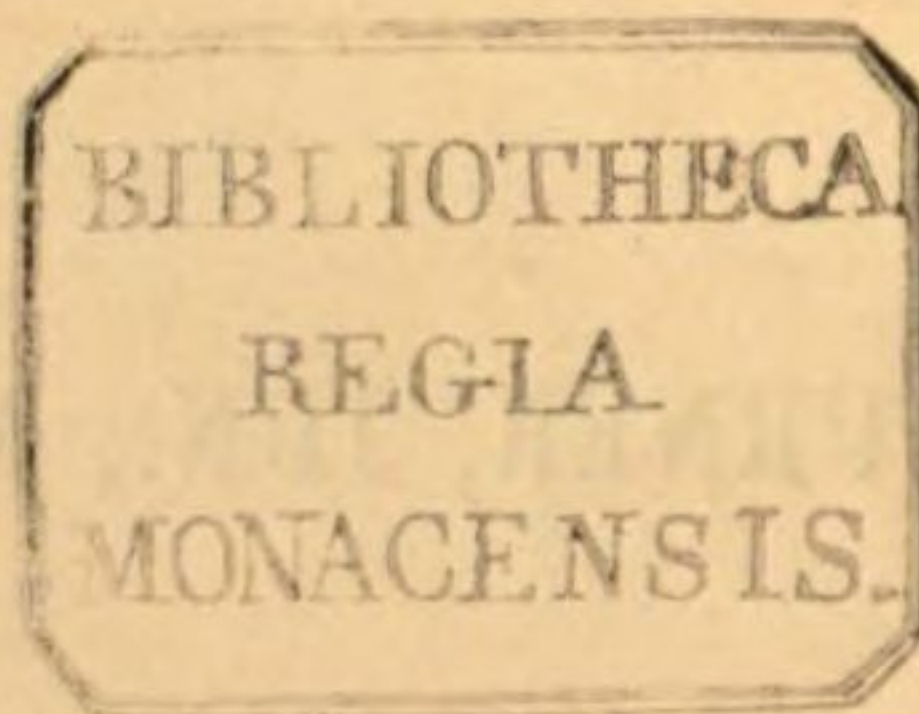
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CONTENTS.

	Page
Introduction	1
William Robertson	5
Theophilus Lindsey	25
John Jebb	82
Edward Evanson	118
Robert Tyrwhitt	155
Paul Henry Maty	166
John Disney	178
Thomas Fyshe Palmer	214
Gilbert Wakefield	239
William Frend	279
Samuel Bourn	313
William Turner	336
Richard Price	382
Joseph Priestley	438

CONTENTS

ERRATA.

Page 18, line 14, for "*Master*" read *Mater*.

— 33, — 13, for "latter" read *better*.

— 58, — 7, in foot note, for "revival" read *revisal*.

— 67, — 17, for "hypocritical" read *hypercritical*.

— 90, — 10, for "axioms" read *odious*.

INTRODUCTION.

THE eminent persons who have been commemorated in the former part of this work as professors of different forms of Unitarianism, were for the most part born and bred in the bosom of the Nonconformist churches. It is probable that they were in general Nonconformists upon principle; that is, not merely dissenters from the accident of their position, as disapproving of the doctrines or discipline of the established church, but opposed to all civil establishments of religion, whatever their constitution or creed might be.

But it is notorious that there has always existed within the church itself a numerous body, comprising many persons of considerable note both among the clergy and the laity, who have doubted or rejected this leading tenet of the body to which they nominally belonged. There have seldom been wanting many who have not hesitated to avow their disbelief through the medium of the press, and occasionally from the pulpit itself, but without feeling themselves bound on that account to dissolve their connexion with the establishment, or resign their stations and emoluments as its ministers. To this class are to be referred several of the most

distinguished scholars and divines of the last century; among whom we find the names of Clarke, Whitby, Law, Clayton, Sykes, Jortin, and many others of inferior note. Numerous as is the list of *avowed* Unitarians of this description, there is every reason to believe that the number has been still greater of those who have entertained similar sentiments in private, but have not chosen to bring them publicly forward, though their dissent from the creeds and articles which they outwardly professed, and from the liturgy which they continued to recite, has been perfectly well known to their more immediate connexions.

It is not for us to sit in judgment on our Christian brethren of this class; to his own Master every one standeth or falleth. We may however be allowed to express our wonder at conduct which appears to us inconsistent with the spirit of simplicity and godly sincerity naturally expected from votaries of the gospel of truth, in all the relations of life; and more especially in a capacity and under circumstances so intimately connected with their peculiar character as religious men. Even that passive conformity which great numbers are contented to practise, in attending statedly on the public services of a church in whose leading doctrines, especially on this point of the proper object of religious worship, they do not concur, we cannot but deeply regret; and we think it impossible to vindicate it on any principle of Christian sincerity or consistency. But what shall we say of those who, entertaining and perhaps making no secret of the same convic-

tions, continue through life, for themselves and their assembled Christian brethren, to offer up to one whom they believe to be a creature, and to have expressly forbidden his disciples to pray to him, that homage and supreme worship which is due only to the infinite uncreated One !

Nevertheless, we can understand in some measure the difficulties in which these ministers of a Trinitarian church may often find themselves placed, when by slow degrees they at length become sensible of the discrepancy between their private opinions and those official duties which at first they conscientiously practised. For a while, as this deviation is gradually becoming more and more perceptible to their own minds, the path of duty may perhaps appear doubtful, even to a man of the strictest principle. But when it has advanced to that crisis, at which it is no longer possible for them not to feel that the dictates of a strict integrity would require them to surrender what have hitherto been their only means of subsistence—to quit stations of honor and great usefulness—duties in which they delighted and excelled, and in discharging which they were conscious of rendering eminent services to their brethren—and to throw themselves and their families unprovided on the world, perhaps among those who, far from approving, would censure and vilify that very conduct in which their conscientious regard to the paramount obligations of truth and principle had been most eminently displayed,—if at last they give way under the trial, they are certainly objects not merely of

blame but of pity. These difficulties, and the struggles they occasioned, during the painful interval in which the path of imperative duty was not as yet clearly discerned, have been feelingly described by several of the excellent persons who at length triumphed over them; and the honour in which we justly hold these illustrious confessors of the truth as it is in Jesus, may itself prevent us from visiting with too severe a censure those who have fallen short under circumstances to which we have no right to presume that we ourselves should have been found equal.

It has not been thought advisable, in laying the plan of this work, to include in it those (however distinguished they might be in other respects) who have not scrupled to remain through life the ministers or members of a Trinitarian church. But passing over these, we feel ourselves bound to pay double honour to men whose prevailing regard for integrity and Christian truth has strengthened them to make the sacrifices (in some instances by no means trifling) which their principles appeared to them to require. We have now therefore to call the attention of our readers to some of those names which on this ground deserve to be had in lasting remembrance.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON

ON every account deserves to stand at the head of this honourable catalogue, as having been the earliest Unitarian confessor from within the walls of the church, at a period, in a country, and under circumstances which offered the greatest discouragements, and imposed on him peculiar sacrifices and difficulties. He was born at Dublin, October 16th, 1705: his father was a Scotchman, engaged in the Irish linen manufacture; his mother an English woman of a respectable family in the county of Durham.* At the age of twelve years he was placed under the tuition of Mr. Francis Hutcheson, who afterwards attained a high and well-merited reputation as Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow. Though at that period a very young man, Mr. Hutcheson had already given promise of his future eminence, by the publication of his "Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue;" a work which is still referred to as of standard authority by those who adopt its views of the disputable questions of ethical science. Mr. Robertson appears to have conceived for him a warm attachment and respect; and many years after, having occasion to mention his name in his "Attempt to explain the words, Reason, &c.," he speaks of him as "the

* Monthly Repository, i. 172.

celebrated Dr. Hutcheson, my ever-honoured master." He quitted Mr. Hutcheson in 1722, and proceeded to Glasgow, to enter on his academical studies in that University. Here he continued till 1725, when he took the degree of M.A.

The University of Glasgow at this period seems to have been declining in reputation and prosperity, notwithstanding the presence and labours of several men of high character in various departments. Among these were Mr. Gershom Carmichael, Professor of Moral Philosophy; Dr. Simson, the well-known editor of Euclid, and in other respects of first-rate celebrity as a mathematician; and Mr. John Simpson, the Professor of Divinity, a man of excellent character and talents, who several years afterwards earned a somewhat less enviable reputation by the violent bigotry of an ultra-orthodox party in the church, who attempted to eject him from his professorship in consequence of some very just, but perhaps indiscreetly expressed, criticisms on the Athanasian creed. In this attempt however (at least as far as the emoluments of his office were concerned) they were defeated, like the promoters of a somewhat similar attack on Dr. Doddridge about the same time (see vol. i., p. 350), by the prompt interference of George II.*

In the year 1725, a dispute arose, or was revived, between the students and Mr. Stirling the Principal, respecting the election of the

* "They may eject him," said he, "*ex officio* if they will, but I will take care they do not eject him *ex beneficio*."

Rector; an officer whose function corresponds in some measure with that of Vice-Chancellor at Oxford or Cambridge, but who has been generally, at least of late years, some lay gentleman of distinction, not immediately connected with the University. The annual appointment of this officer, the Principal and Professors it would seem had for some time assumed into their own hands. Against this encroachment, as they deemed it, on their rights, the students protested; and Mr. Robertson, who took a leading part in the business, was deputed to wait on the Principal and assert their claim, which was however rejected with contempt. They afterwards drew up their protest in a more formal shape, and proceeded in a body to the house of the *intrusive* Rector, to whom it was read by Mr. Robertson. For this and other alleged tumultuous and disorderly proceedings in the course of this dispute, he was brought to a formal trial before the Faculty, consisting of the Principal and Professors of the University, and was by them found guilty and sentenced to be expelled. It was however so clear that this sentence was not owing to any charge involving an imputation on his personal conduct or character, that his father not only approved of what he had hitherto done, but supplied him with the means of continuing his exertions to assert and maintain the rights of himself and his fellow-students.

With this view Mr. Robertson proceeded to London, and presented himself, memorial in hand, to the Duke of Argyle, at that period, as we need not inform the readers of Sir Walter

Scott, the general refuge of such of his countrymen as had any worthy object in which the assistance of a nobleman of high character and well-earned influence with the government might be useful. He however referred him to his brother, Archibald, Earl of Ilay, who was more conversant with these matters. Mr. Robertson accordingly applied to this nobleman, who, after a careful consideration of the whole dispute, warmly patronized the cause of the students; and with such vigour and effect, that before long, he was placed at the head of a royal commission, appointed to visit the University, not only to examine into, but to rectify all abuses.

Armed with this commission, the Earl of Ilay with the other visitors repaired to Glasgow in the summer of 1726, to hold a "royal visitation;" and, "on a full examination of the several injuries and abuses complained of, they restored to the students the right of electing the Rector; called Mr. Sterling, the Principal, to a severe account for the public money which he had embezzled; recovered the right of the University to send two gentlemen on plentiful exhibitions to Baliol College in Oxford; took off the expulsion of Mr. Robertson, and ordered *that* particularly to be recorded in the proceedings of the commission; annulled the election of the Rector whom the Principal had named, and assembled the students, who immediately chose the Master of Ross, the son of Lord Ross, as Rector.

"These proceedings so affected Mr. Sterling, that he died soon after; but the University re-

vived, and has continued in a most flourishing condition ever since. Mr. Robertson was all this time in London; but an account of the proceedings was communicated to him by letter from Dr. W. Wishart, who was then one of the ministers of Glasgow, and one of the commissioners; a gentleman well known in the learned world, and afterwards Principal of the University of Edinburgh. A remarkable expression in one of Dr. Wishart's letters to Mr. Robertson was as follows: 'The commissioners have made several other regulations for the good order of the University, and preventing tyranny in future.' **

There can be no question that this royal visitation was the means of introducing various important changes in the discipline and general conduct of the University, which have mainly contributed to the high reputation and prosperity which it has ever since enjoyed, under the auspices of a continued series of eminent men as Professors in various departments; among whom Hutcheson, Leechman, Adam Smith, Moor, Reid, Millar, Irvine, and others not inferior in merit though less known to fame, shine conspicuous. As one of the most active instruments in obtaining this important reformation, all those who have since enjoyed the benefit of the improvements then introduced, may look back with grateful respect to the name of William Robertson. To what extent the privilege then secured to the students, and which was the principal subject of dispute, has been

* Monthly Repository, O.S., vol. i. 171.

conducive to this desirable result, may not be quite so clear. Whatever it may have been at first, it has degenerated of late years into a mere annual party struggle, in which the object has been, not to appoint a person likely to promote the interests or to take a useful part in the management of the institution as a place of liberal education, but to pay a sort of compliment to some noted political character of the day, who has often no personal interest in, or knowledge of, the place with which he thus obtains an accidental short-lived connexion.

Though Mr. Robertson was reinstated as a member of the University by the act of the royal visitors, he does not appear to have returned thither. For some time he remained in London, where it is likely enough that a result so unusual of a struggle between a University and a young man of twenty, had brought him into considerable notice. Among other distinguished persons, he was received with much civility by Archbishop Wake, and Dr. Hoadly, then Bishop of Salisbury; but he occupied his time chiefly in visiting public libraries, attending public lectures, and embracing every opportunity of improvement which a residence in the metropolis might afford. In 1727 he returned to his native country, in company with Dr. John Hoadly, who had been nominated to the united sees of Ferns and Leighlin. Having now determined to enter the episcopal church, he was ordained by this prelate, and shortly afterwards appointed to the curacy of Tullow, in the county of Carlow. This he held till he was of sufficient age to be ordained a priest

(Nov. 10, 1729), on which he was presented by Lord Carteret, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, to the rectory of Ravilly, in the county of Carlow, and of Kilravelly, in the county of Wicklow.

In 1728 Mr. Robertson had married Elizabeth, daughter of Major William Baxter;—the same who is mentioned by Burnet, in his History of his own Times, as a person of unblemished reputation, who had given him information, when a refugee in Holland, of having seen in the Secretary of State's office an order for three thousand pounds to a person unnamed who was to destroy him.* By this lady, who he tells us was extremely beautiful in her person, but much more so in her mind, he had twenty-one children, all of whom with their mother went to their graves before him. In 1738 he was collated to the vicarages of Rathmoe and Straboe, and the perpetual curacy of Rahil, all in the county of Carlow, by Dr. Synge, Bishop of Ferns. These livings, taken together, produced an income of about two hundred pounds a year, but would have produced a much greater sum, if what was then called the *agistment* tithe had been allowed on land employed in rearing black cattle, in which almost the whole of these parishes was at that period engaged, along with a great extent of land in every part of the country. This species of tithe, though evidently authorized by the principle of the impost, and recognized as such by repeated decisions of the courts, was nevertheless opposed with such vehemence by the graziers, then a very powerful body, and backed

* Burnet's Hist. of His own Times, Oxford ed. vol. iii. p. 212.

by strong resolutions of the Irish House of Commons, that the clergy did not persevere in exacting it. The impolicy of rendering the parochial clergyman dependant for his income on a local tax of this description,—always unpopular, oppressive in the mode of its collection, inconsistent with the general prosperity of the country, and such as almost inevitably to place him in a state of collision with his principal parishioners,—seems to have been forcibly impressed on Mr. Robertson's mind; and he embodied his views on it in a pamphlet published about this time, entitled "A Scheme for utterly Abolishing the present heavy and vexatious Tax of Tithes," the purport of which was to pay the clergy and impropriators by a tax upon land in lieu of all tithe. This publication excited a good deal of attention at the time, but no legislative measure was ever founded upon it.

In 1758, he met with a severe trial in the death of his wife, to whom he was most tenderly attached; but sustained it with exemplary resignation and submission to the will of God. Soon after this afflictive event, he met with a new patron in Dr. Richard Robinson, who was translated from the see of Killala to that of Ferns. At his first visitation in 1759, he made some overtures of further preferment to Mr. Robertson, which in the first instance were gratefully accepted. But, previous to institution, he met with the "Free and Candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England," which awakened painful scruples in his mind on the subject of subscription to the Articles.

We have no means of ascertaining with any

probability the religious opinions with which our author set out in life, or the gradual progress of that change, by which he at length found himself compelled in his declining years, at the very moment when increased means were within his grasp, to abandon a station of respectability, if not of affluence, and cast himself without adequate provision on a censorious world. It is probable that in his case, as in many others, the transition took place not suddenly, but by slow and almost imperceptible degrees. The Athanasian creed he seems for some time not to have read; and long before the final crisis, there was doubtless in his mind a growing dissatisfaction with many of the doctrinal articles of the church, especially those which savour of Calvinism, as well as with various parts of the ritual to which he was required to conform. For a time, like many other upright and honourable men, he satisfied himself with the persuasion that the points of difference (into which perhaps he was not anxious minutely and critically to examine), were of inferior importance; that the great practical principles, in which the main value of Christianity consists, were common to all sects, and that in order to secure, not only the means of subsistence for himself and his family, but a station affording the opportunity of usefulness to others, it was necessary to adopt a system of compromise and to overlook minor differences. When however he received overtures of fresh preferment, and was led by the circumstance already mentioned to inquire more fully into this matter than he had before done, he found

it necessary to examine the state of his own mind more narrowly, before he could again take the doubtful step of subscribing articles of faith which he was conscious he did not altogether approve;—and it soon became manifest that his deviations from the standards of his church were by no means such as a candid and honest man could fairly represent to himself as of inferior moment. He now perceived that he could not venture on that renewed subscription which was necessary to the acceptance of further preferment, without forfeiting his peace of conscience and the approbation of his own mind. He accordingly wrote to his diocesan the following excellent and affecting letter, explaining his reasons for declining to avail himself of his friendly offers.

“ To the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Ferns,
Dublin.

“ Ravilly, Jan. 15, 1760.

“ My dear good Lord,

“ Since I last did myself the honour to write to you, I have been very unwell, occasioned by a violent agitation in my mind, upon a subject of the highest importance to me. But now that my resolution is fixed and my mind a little settled, I find myself in some measure capable of writing to you. And first, my Lord, suffer me to return you all the thanks that can flow from the most grateful heart, for your great goodness to me.

“ That you should not only offer me the parishes of Tullamoy and Balliquillane, but assure me, in your last letter, that you would

accommodate me in the best manner you could! How then must I lament, in the second place, that I find myself incapable of receiving your Lordship's favours. I beg leave to inform your Lordship, that last October a book was put into my hands, which (though it had been published many years) I had never seen before, called 'Free and Candid Disquisitions, &c.' I set about reading it with some prejudice against the avowed design; but on considering matters seriously, I was brought over to be of the author's opinions in several particulars. So that I find I cannot now bring myself to an unfeigned assent and consent to ALL things contained in the Book of Common Prayer, &c.

"In debating this matter with myself, besides the arguments directly to the purpose, several strong collateral considerations came in upon the positive side of the question. The straitness of my circumstances pressed me close; a numerous family, quite unprovided for, pleaded with the most pathetic and moving eloquence; and the infirmities and wants of age, now coming fast upon me, were urged feelingly. But one single consideration prevailed over all these. That the Creator and Governor of the universe, whom it is my first duty to worship and adore, being the God of Truth, it must be disagreeable to him to profess, subscribe, or declare, in any matter relating to his worship and service, what is not believed strictly and simply to be true.

"Thus, my Lord, I have presumed to represent to you the present state of my mind: and now, I fear, I must take my leave of your

Lordship. Suffer me then to do it with assuring you, that I am, with all gratitude, esteem, and affection,

“ My dear good Lord,
“ Your Lordship’s most obliged,
“ Most dutiful, and most devoted humble servant,
“ WILLIAM ROBERTSON.”

For some time longer, he did not clearly perceive that the path of duty led him further than to decline all fresh advancement and renewed subscription, or required from him the decisive step of renouncing altogether his connexion with a church whose leading tenet respecting the object of divine worship he now acknowledged to be unscriptural. At length however, in the year 1764, he resigned all his benefices together, being now fully convinced that no other alternative was left to him. What private resources he had at this period, does not appear; but there is every reason to believe that they were very limited; and some years elapsed before any other provision was offered to him, which, as will be seen, was after all but inadequate to his necessities. Nor do we find that many of those who had hitherto been his friends, were either willing or able to appreciate as it deserved that part of his conduct which above all others entitled him to the esteem and respect of all good men, whatever might be their opinions on the points in dispute. To the secret consciences of some perhaps it read a lesson of reproof, which they could not bring themselves to take in good part; while others, to whom the surrender of a

good living for conscience's sake was altogether a new idea, contented themselves with exclaiming, "You are a madman; you do not know the world."

In 1766 Mr. R. published a small volume, entitled, "An Attempt to explain the words, Reason, Substance, Person, Creeds, Orthodoxy, Catholic Church, Subscription, and Index Expurgatorius. By a Presbyter of the Church of England." This work, which is written in such a style as to convey a very favourable impression of his talents and learning, also unfolds very clearly the state of his mind on the important and interesting questions with which at this critical period of his life it must have been engrossed. It presents to us in a short compass the result of much thought and reflection, and sound and judicious views not only on the Trinitarian controversy in particular, but on the great principles of free inquiry, and the right use of reason in matters of religion, which are the basis of all consistent Protestantism. Under the titles, "Substance and Person," and "Creeds," we have a rapid but striking and very just historical sketch of the rise and progress of the Arian and Athanasian parties in the church; when idle questions of words and names, to which no one even pretended to affix an intelligible meaning, were made to take the place of the essential truths and principles of the Gospel, and, what was worse, expelled the *spirit* of the Gospel from men's minds, to make way for the dæmons of faction, priestcraft, and persecution. Then first not only were creeds drawn up in all the pride of technical forms on

points utterly unknown to the Scriptures, but imposed on the churches of Christ by the terrors of an anathema. This would have been only an empty menace; but unhappily, along with these feuds and divisions came in also the fatal union of church and state, enabling bishops and councils to lord it over the consciences of their brethren; wielding for this purpose a delegated portion of that secular power with which the emperor enslaved them all.

This little work attracted a good deal of attention at the time of its publication, and speedily went through three editions. The author presented a copy to his *Alma Mater*, the University of Glasgow; and it is somewhat remarkable that a book of so heretical a cast procured the degree of Doctor in Divinity, from a *senatus academicus*, every member of which had of course subscribed the confession of faith, for one who had so publicly avowed himself a professor of the most obnoxious form of a doctrine every where spoken against. Perhaps the recollection of his services forty years before may have contributed in some degree to this result.

This treatise of Dr. Robertson's gave rise to a tract entitled, "Observations on a late Resignation," by the Rev. Philip Skelton, an Irish clergyman and a friend of the author; who though publicly expressing a dissent from his opinions, did not suffer the change which had taken place to destroy or diminish his personal regard. He even offered him an asylum in his house; or, if he declined this, a liberal contribution to his support. Dr. Robertson declined

placing himself under this sort of obligation, but their friendship and correspondence continued to the end of his life; and it is understood that a grandson, whom he sent to the University of Dublin, was taken under Mr. Skelton's care and patronage.

Shortly after the publication of this treatise, Dr. Robertson quitted Ireland, and resided for some time in London; where the attention which his work received from the public and the interest excited by his then uncommon history, procured him a good deal of notice from persons of eminence. It was some time however before he obtained any provision for the increasing wants and infirmities of declining years; though overtures appear to have been made to him, which his high sense of principle and integrity induced him to decline. It is said that a nobleman, connected with the administration of the day, called on him, and after some handsome compliments to his talents and character, expressed a wish to engage his services as a writer in support of government. "Give me *truth*, my Lord," replied he, "give me *truth*, and I will write." He heard, it is added, no more of this proposition.

In the year 1768 the Mastership of the Wolverhampton Grammar School became vacant, and was conferred on Dr. Robertson by the Merchant Taylors' Company of London.*

* Mr. Belsham, in his "Memoirs of Lindsey" (p. 168), inserts the following interesting extract of a letter from Mr. Thomas Hollis:

"Dr. Robertson, I believe, at first thought the school in Staffordshire to be better circumstanced than it really

For some time however the income of this appointment, never very ample, was reduced to a mere pittance, being burdened with a pension to his superannuated predecessor. His wants however were but moderate, and he not only knew how to accommodate them to his resources, but had learnt, in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content. "My own private affairs," says he in a letter to a friend (Aug. 25, 1771), "are exactly *in statu quo*. The old incumbent is still alive and well, so

was; and afterwards having been chosen to it with great good-will and earnestness by the trustees of it, he then thought it a kind of shame to decline it. A little before the Doctor went out of town, he communicated to me the following singular and very fine anecdote, but in his own finer manner:—That a country clergyman, of a good look and great simplicity of manners, had then lately called upon him one morning at his lodgings, and asked him if his name was Robertson? On being answered in the affirmative, he seized his hand, shook it heartily, said he had heard much of him, had read and approved his book, rejoiced to see him more than any man in England, and that having brought fourscore pounds to town to lay out by way of addition to some stock which he already possessed in the funds, there it was,—pulling out a bag of money from his pocket and laying it by Dr. Robertson,—he could never dispose of it so usefully, so excellently, as to him. The Doctor, astonished, entreated him many times to put up his bag again, for that he had no need of it, being without want; which at last, with very great reluctance, he did, after having repeatedly exclaimed, 'Why, man! I have no use for it; at least take a part.' The name of this clergyman was William Hopkins, of Cuckfield; a gentleman it seems who has long since distinguished himself for good sense, learning, and public spirit, by his writings. Archbishops of England and Ireland! who declare difference of opinion from your small sect to be a *misfortune*, match if ye can, in your like, this pair! I could not help saying to Dr. Robertson, that for both's sake I thought he should have taken ten guineas."

that his forty pounds deducted out of seventy must be felt. But as my desires are very moderate, I want for no necessaries; and as for the superfluities of life, perhaps I am better without them." At Wolverhampton he also lived in comparative obscurity, occupied with the routine of his school duties. He was however preserved from actual want, by the contributions of several friends who revered his virtues, and had not forgotten him in his retirement. Among the rest, he received a legacy of £500 from an eminent dignitary of the church of Ireland, whose name however has not transpired.

In 1772, Dr. Robertson took an active part as one of the committee of the petitioning clergy, in the management of their application for relief from subscription to the articles. By abandoning his preferment, he had taken his own method of relieving himself from this heavy yoke, as far as he was personally concerned; but he was not on that account the less interested in the exertions made by many of his brethren to procure legal redress. This petition was brought forward by an association of some clergymen of the establishment and a few of the laity, called, from the place of their meeting, the Feathers Tavern Association. It was drawn up by Archdeacon Blackburne, the celebrated author of "The Confessional," a work which had recently made a very powerful impression on the public mind.

Though considerable exertions were made to procure signatures to this petition, from clergymen in different parts of the kingdom, the

entire number only amounted at last to about two hundred and fifty. It cannot be doubted that this short list comprised but a small portion of those who felt themselves aggrieved by the present system, and would gladly have seen a relaxation of it. But the majority were cautious and timid, unwilling to commit themselves, desirous to put it off to a more convenient season; and others, after making fair promises, hesitated and drew back at the last moment. Of too many, their subsequent conduct constrains us to say, that though they would have had no objection to step into the enjoyment of liberty through the virtuous toils of others, they had a much stronger attachment to the praise of men and the good things of this world. Among those who *did* sign, we find however a noble band, whose names deserve to be held in lasting remembrance,—of some of whom the world was not worthy.

The petitioners decided to address themselves in the first instance to the House of Commons, where their petition was presented by Sir W. Meredith, and after a long debate, in which Sir G. Savile particularly distinguished himself, was rejected by 217 to 71. All things considered, the minority was as large as had been expected even by the friends of the measure; and its supporters had so decidedly the advantage in the debate, that there seemed little reason to doubt that by perseverance and ‘agitation,’ the voice of truth and justice would at length be heard. Unhappily more timid counsels prevailed;—the application was not renewed in the succeeding session; and thus the question

was allowed to fall to the ground. After a lapse of nearly seventy years, it is but too probable that neither the public at large, nor the ruling powers in church or state, would now be even as well prepared as they were then, to listen with favour to a similar proposition. Indeed it is very doubtful whether among the aggrieved party as many as even two hundred and fifty could now be prevailed on to put their names to such a petition.

When Mr. Lindsey opened his chapel in Essex-street, he was desirous of obtaining the services of Dr. Robertson, as a colleague; and in the beginning of 1778, when this venerable confessor was already upwards of seventy-two years of age, he was on the point of removing to town for that purpose. But having been informed that some persons, with more zeal than knowledge, were about to institute a prosecution against him for teaching without a license, he, with the spirit of a young warrior, determined to stand his ground and abide the event. As it happened, this illiberal scheme came to nothing. A popish seminary of some consequence was established in the neighbourhood, and it appeared that a prosecution could not be carried on with any decency against the one, without being also instituted, on the same principles, against the other,—which they knew would be very unacceptable to the ruling powers; and thus the Unitarian found himself safe under the protection of popery!

After this period, Dr. Robertson spent the short remainder of his life in the settlement which had been provided for him at Wolver-

hampton, continuing to discharge the laborious duties of his office as long as health and strength remained, and living in the greatest harmony with all classes. He was accustomed to express great thankfulness for the lot in life which it had pleased Providence to appoint for him ; though he had certainly met with severe trials, and, in the last few years of his life more especially, much affliction and sorrow ; having been bereaved of the whole of his once numerous family, and left in his old age a solitary pilgrim, to pursue, in a land of strangers, his journey to the grave. By him, however, this heavy dispensation was received in that meek submission and cheerful trust, which is the portion of those only who can look forward, with a fixed and abiding faith, to the regions where the holy and good shall meet to part no more. He died at Wolverhampton, May 28, 1783, in the seventy-seventh year of his age.

THEOPHILUS LINDSEY.

THE name we have now inscribed is on many accounts the most distinguished in the list of worthies whom it is our present object to commemorate. This arises, not merely from the talents and acquirements of this eminent person,—qualities in which he was equalled, if not surpassed, by some others,—but from the circumstances which attracted to his case a larger share of the public attention; from the manner in which he became instrumental in establishing the first permanent religious society avowedly formed on Unitarian principles; but, above all, from the singular purity and excellence of his character, adorning the doctrine he professed with all the most amiable and attractive graces of the Christian life. Unbending integrity and a strict regard to truth and principle were in him so tempered by a guileless simplicity, by a warm and active but unostentatious benevolence, and by a fervent but rational piety, that even those who most disapproved his opinions were compelled, not only to admire the sacrifice he had made on their account, but to acknowledge that in the midst of what they called heresy, there reigned the spirit of Christ,—the genuine marks of the true Christian disciple.

Theophilus Lindsey was born at Middlewich,

in Cheshire, June 20, 1723. His father, Mr. Robert Lindsey, was extensively engaged in the salt works which are carried on in that neighbourhood. He was at one time a person of some opulence; but suffered considerably by the imprudence of an elder son by his first wife, whom he had admitted to a share in the business. His second wife was a Spencer, distantly related to the Marlborough family, who had resided for many years with Frances, Countess of Huntingdon. The youngest of her three children was named after his godfather, Theophilus, Earl of Huntingdon, the son of this lady, and husband of the celebrated Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, afterwards so well known as the zealous and liberal patroness of Mr. Whitfield and the Calvinistic Methodists. Theophilus was taken under the more particular patronage of Lady Betty and Lady Ann Hastings, who remarked at an early period his promising talents and serious spirit. These excellent ladies were not less distinguished for their genuine piety and extensive benevolence, than for their high station; and at their house, where he constantly spent his vacations, he had the rare opportunity of profiting by the most cultivated and highly-polished society, separated in a great measure from the false maxims and delusive expectations with which it is too generally associated. Under the direction of his kind patronesses, he was committed to the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Barnard, Master of the Free Grammar School at Leeds, near which town they at that time resided. To this gentleman his grateful pupil was afterwards wont to

ascribe, under Providence, almost all that was honourable and right in his own character. In 1741 he was entered at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he quickly distinguished himself, not only by his proficiency in the pursuits and studies of the place, but by exemplary conduct and purity of manners. Hence he was recommended to Dr. Reynolds, Bishop of Lincoln, as a proper person to take charge of his grandson, a promising youth of fifteen, whom he was proposing to send to College; a charge of which he so acquitted himself, as to lay the foundation of a firm and tender friendship, which continued without interruption to the end of Mr. Lindsey's life.

In 1747, Mr. Lindsey was elected fellow of his College; but did not continue long resident at the University, as his chief ambition was to be a minister of the gospel in the established church, in which he had been educated, and to whose doctrines and modes of worship he at that time felt no difficulty or scruple in conforming. Having accordingly taken orders, he was presented to a chapel in Spital Square, by Sir George Wheeler, at the recommendation of his friend and patroness, Lady Ann Hastings. Shortly afterwards he became domestic chaplain to Algernon, Duke of Somerset, to whom and to his lady he recommended himself to such a degree, that he was treated with all the affection and confidence of friendship. After the death of the Duke of Somerset, he continued for some time longer with the Duchess; until, at her particular and earnest request, he proceeded to the continent in charge of her grand-

son, afterwards Duke of Northumberland, then about nine years of age, and in a delicate state of health. Here he remained for about two years ; at the end of which, he returned with his pupil restored in health and improved in learning. He was soon afterwards presented by the Earl of Northumberland to the valuable rectory of Kirby-Wiske, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, whither he immediately proceeded to enter on his duties as a parochial minister ; this being in his judgment the office in which he could best serve God and be useful to man.

In this very retired situation Mr. Lindsey continued for about three years ; during which period he was introduced to the acquaintance and became a visitor in the family of the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne, at Richmond ; a circumstance which in various ways deeply affected the character and the happiness of his future life. In 1756 he resigned Kirby-Wiske, for the living of Piddletown, in Dorsetshire, which was in the gift of Lord Huntingdon, and where he continued to discharge the peaceful and honourable duties of a country clergyman for seven years. During this period, he was married, September 29, 1760, to Miss Hannah Elsworth, the step-daughter of Archdeacon Blackburne ; a lady who well deserved the character given of her by Mr. Belsham, as of principles and views congenial to his own ; whose superior understanding and exalted virtues were eminently calculated (as her excellent consort most cheerfully acknowledged) to aid and second him in all his schemes for the temporal and spiritual benefit of his parishioners,

and especially of the poor and ignorant; to go hand in hand with him in his researches after divine truth; to encourage him in every labour, in every profession, and in every sacrifice, to which he might be prompted by a sense of duty, and to fortify and console his mind under trials and privations of no common sort, and which it required no ordinary share of fortitude and magnanimity to support with dignity and to encounter with success.

It was at this period that Mr. Lindsey first began to entertain scruples with respect to the doctrines of the church. It had always struck him as "a strange unnecessary entanglement, to put young men upon declaring and subscribing their approbation of such a large heterogeneous mass of positions and doctrines;" but he had hitherto no doubts on his own part. Being now however led to examine more fully in consequence of the doubts which began to spring up in his mind, "the more," says he, "I searched, the more I saw the little foundation there was for the doctrine commonly received and interwoven with all the public devotions of the church, and could not but be disturbed at a discovery so ill suiting my situation." He had even thoughts at this early period of relieving himself from his difficulties, by relinquishing his station in the church; but was led for the present to abandon this design, in some considerable measure by the same arguments which have weighed with so many under similar circumstances. He reflected that he had been educated for this ministry,—that his heart was engaged in this

service,—that he had reason to think himself useful and respectable in it, and that many of his friends would probably be shocked by the strange singularity of such a procedure. Many others, perhaps wiser and better men than himself, had remained in the church, though their opinions differed but little from his own. Besides, he was not the author or contriver of the evils complained of: he was only ministerial, in submission to the civil authority, which had imposed these things for peace and the public good.

Quieted for the present by such considerations as these, he began to seek for some mode of interpretation by which the language of the prescribed forms of Trinitarian worship could be reconciled with his own just and scriptural views of the unity of God. He accordingly adopted something like the Sabellian principle of interpretation,—representing the Trinitarian forms as a three-fold way of addressing the Deity,—as the Creator and original benevolent Cause of all things,—as the Redeemer of mankind by his Son,—and their Sanctifier by his Holy Spirit. With such expedients as these he persuaded himself to rest satisfied a few years longer, and under their influence he even consented to pass once more through the ordeal subscription necessary to entering on the living of Catterick, near Richmond, in Yorkshire. For this he exchanged that of Piddletown, in 1763; not however from any motive of increased pecuniary emolument, for in this respect it was considerably inferior, but in order to be nearer to Archdeacon Blackburne, and to many other

valued friends. How little Mr. L. was at any time influenced by mere worldly motives, he had recently shewn in a very remarkable instance. In 1762, the Duke of Northumberland was sent as Lord-Lieutenant to Ireland, and would gladly have taken Mr. Lindsey with him as his chaplain; an appointment which would have been the almost certain prelude to some high station in the church of Ireland; and such a station, which his excellent qualities would have peculiarly fitted him to occupy and adorn. With much gratitude however, but with firmness and decision, he declined the tempting offer, and contented himself with the comparatively humble and obscure, but tranquil station of a parish minister. To the duties of this station, in which he delighted and eminently excelled, he applied himself with exemplary diligence and assiduity; labouring by every means in his power to promote not only the spiritual but the temporal welfare of his flock, especially of the poor, the young, the sick, and the afflicted; studying the greatest economy in his domestic arrangements, not in order that he might lay up in store from the income of his living, but that he might have a larger fund to expend in works of liberality and Christian love. So that it is only a statement of the simple truth, when he affirms in his affecting farewell address to his parishioners,—“It is a great satisfaction at this my departure from you, that I can truly say, I have coveted no man’s silver, nor gold, nor apparel. In nothing have I made a gain of you, or sought to enrich myself, nor am I enriched by you at all; but

what was over and above the supply of necessary wants, has been freely expended in the various ways which it was thought might be most useful for your present benefit and future happiness. I have not sought *yours*, but *you*.”*

In all this he was zealously assisted by Mrs. Lindsey, who was in every respect an admirable helpmate, entering into all his views, promoting all his plans, cheerfully submitting to the privation of many indulgences which their station and income might seem to justify, and devoting herself unremittingly to all the cares by which she might not only add to the amount of their stores for every good work, but render them as effective as possible by a wise and judicious distribution. At Catterick he proposed quietly to have ended his days, seeking for no other preferment, nor accepting any if it should be offered. His only drawback from the unalloyed happiness of a life so spent, was a growing dissatisfaction with the plausible but clearly sophistical reasoning by which he had hitherto endeavoured to reconcile himself to a continuance in a church, whose distinguishing doctrines he no longer believed.

In the summer of 1769, Mr. Lindsey had the satisfaction to be introduced, at the house of Archdeacon Blackburne, to Dr. Priestley and Mr. Turner of Wakefield, with both of whom he formed from that time the most intimate friendship, and whose cordial concurrence, sympathy, and judicious advice and assistance, were a

* Address, &c., p. 13.

most valuable encouragement to him in the trying circumstances which were shortly to arise. About this period he seems to have communicated to Dr. Priestley the difficulties under which he laboured, and the decisive step which he already meditated in order to relieve himself from them. Dr. P. tells us that at first he was not forward to encourage him in it, but rather advised him to make what alteration he thought proper in the offices of the church, and leave it to his superiors to dismiss him if they chose: but he candidly acknowledges that Mr. Lindsey chose the latter part. To the Theological Repository, at this time set on foot by Dr. Priestley, he gave his support and assistance, by the contributions of several short but valuable papers, under the signatures of Patrobas and Socrates Scholasticus.

That Mr. Lindsey took a warm and lively interest in the controversy excited by the celebrated treatise of his friend and neighbour at Richmond, "the Confessional," will be readily supposed; though it does not appear that any of the numerous publications which issued from the press at that period proceeded from his pen. He took a more active part, however, in the clergy's petition which ensued; and by his unwearied diligence in making personal application to the scattered, and many of them timid and time-serving men, who in their hearts wished well to the cause, was mainly instrumental in procuring for it a large portion even of that very limited and scanty support which it at length received. He was induced to take this course in a considerable measure in order

to obviate an objection to his own meditated change on the part of some whose opinion he respected, rather than from any expectation of real and substantial relief. He was very sensible, that even in the event of the petition being received and listened to, it was in the highest degree improbable that such extensive alterations would be introduced into the public service as to meet the case of those who had deviated so widely from the present recognized standards. After the rejection of the petition, and the resolution of the petitioners not for the present to renew their application, Mr. Lindsey felt that the crisis was arrived, and that there was no longer reason or place for delay. He therefore made his intention known to some of his more intimate friends, and commenced his preparation for the approaching change,—not by seeking to save out of the income of his living, for this he had never done at any time, and did not now discontinue or diminish his accustomed liberality to his poorer neighbours,—but by drawing up a detailed statement, to be laid in due time before the public, of the reasons which led to and required a step at that period so unusual. His private resources at this time were very slender, and the prospect of success in his proposed plan of attempting to collect a congregation for the express purpose of Unitarian worship, altogether uncertain. So little had he thought of making pecuniary provision for this trying season, that it was necessary to part with plate and other valuables, and even with a portion of his library, in order to raise a fund for immediate support.

Nor was there at first the support and encouragement which might have been expected from the sympathy and approbation of friends. The greater part even of those who had hitherto so warmly patronized Mr. Lindsey, and who would readily have assisted to raise him to higher dignity and emolument in the church, could not enter into or comprehend his motive for quitting it; or, if they respected his upright and conscientious principles, were so shocked by the "faith every where spoken against," which he had embraced, that they withdrew their countenance, and left him for the most part to seek a supply for his necessities in the zealous and cordial support of new connexions. Arch-deacon Blackburne himself, and many of those with whom he had acted in the late application to Parliament, disapproved of the step which they had in some measure contributed to render necessary, but which they were unable to imitate. They accordingly remonstrated against it most warmly and earnestly, representing it as utter ruin to the cause of the petitioners; whereas one would have thought that the retirement from the church for conscience sake of a man so useful and so generally respected, would rather have appeared to furnish a practical proof of the importance of doing something to prevent others from following such an example, and retain them in that church of which they might be an ornament and support.

On the other hand, there were a few who fully concurred in his views, and were prepared ere long to follow his example, from whom he met with the most lively sympathy and valuable as-

sistance. Among these, the foremost was the excellent Mr. Jebb, whom he would gladly have secured as a coadjutor in his project of opening a place of Unitarian worship. Mr. Jebb's plans were different; but he did all in his power to promote the undertaking, and afterwards when he settled in London became one of its most active and zealous supporters. To this friend Mr. L. wrote as follows, on the same day that he announced his resignation to the bishop: "I have never had the least doubt from the first moment I resolved on the step I am now about to take, that it was right, and my duty. I have had some subsequent hope, too, that it might serve our cause, and the cause of God's truth. I bless the God of heaven for myself, and my wife, who is destined to bear a great part of the burden, that as difficulties increase,—and they must increase, the nearer the time approaches,—our resolution and courage increase; and I have no doubt but the promises made to the faithful servant will be fulfilled in us, that we shall have strength proportioned to our trial and want of it." "My greatest comfort and support," he says on another occasion, "under God, is my wife, who is a Christian indeed, and worthy of a better fate in worldly things than we have a prospect of; for we leave a station of ease and abundance, attended with many other agreeable circumstances. But, thanks be to God, we have not given way to ease and indulgence, and can be content with little." Mrs. Lindsey was in truth an admirable woman,—peculiarly fitted in every way to be the companion of such a man. In piety,

active benevolence and strength of principle they were alike ; but in her there was a vigour and decision in contending with difficulties, in which it is probable that he might have appeared in some measure deficient, through the influence of that amiable mildness, and unwillingness to offend or give pain, which were such remarkable characteristics of his mind.

On Sunday, Nov. 28, 1773, Mr. Lindsey preached his farewell sermon, from Acts xx. 32 : “ And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” Mrs. Cappe, the warm and attached friend of Mr. and Mrs. Lindsey, who was with them during the greater part of this painful season, in the interesting memoirs of her own life, has thus described his last address to his sorrowing flock :—“ I was present at that sermon ; a partaker and witness of a scene, at once the most impressive and the most sorrowful. The church was uncommonly crowded ; many who seldom or never attended his ministry when they apprehended no danger of losing it, now severely reproached themselves for their past neglect. His afflicted parishioners drew the parallel between their honoured pastor and the venerable apostle, bearing their testimony, that not for the space of three, but of ten years, he had ceased not to warn every one, night and day, of their Christian obligations. He was frequently interrupted by the sighs and lamentations of his auditors, who, like the Ephesians of old, sorrowed most of all for the words

that he spake, that they should see his face no more.”*

Mr. Lindsey also printed and circulated among his parishioners a Farewell Address, which was afterwards published. This is a most interesting and impressive tract, written in the genuine apostolic spirit of a faithful Christian pastor, and was justly described as “bearing the very spirit and character of the man.” He explains in simple but expressive terms his motives for leaving them,—pointing out the reasons why he could no longer join in, much less be engaged in conducting Trinitarian worship. He reminds them of his manner of life, and the plan and character of his preaching, and gives them much judicious exhortation and advice, as to the use they should hereafter make of such instructions as should be addressed to them for their progressive improvement in virtue and holiness, concluding with this affecting and fervent petition both for them and for himself: “And now, O Holy Father, the blessed and only Potentate, in conformity to what I believe thy will and my duty, I resign unto thee, from whom I received them, my ministry and people. Do thou raise up unto them a faithful teacher, who shall more effectually preach thy word, turn many from

* See *Memoirs of Mrs. Cappe*, p. 163. The present writer is only prevented from transcribing more largely from the account here given by an eye-witness of all these interesting transactions, by the persuasion that almost all the readers of this volume must be already familiar with it in its own place, as part of a narrative which cannot have been read without deep interest, nor, it may be hoped, without valuable improvement.

sin, and bring all nearer to thee, their only portion and happiness. And graciously dispose of me, thine unworthy servant, where and how I may best be enabled to serve thee, according to the pure gospel of thy Son, through whom I desire to find acceptance with thee, now and for ever."

Shortly afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Lindsey quitted as pilgrims this abode of Christian peace and tranquillity, and like Abraham went out, not knowing whither they went. This in fact was literally true; for though it was Mr. Lindsey's settled purpose to endeavour to collect somewhere a congregation of worshipers avowedly on Unitarian principles, where a reformed Common Prayer might be used, he had no definite prospect of success in this attempt, nor had he even made up his mind in what place it should first be made. Providence however had better things in store for them than were anticipated. After visiting several friends on the road, in the beginning of the year 1774 they arrived in London, where they established themselves in humble lodgings suited to their limited means, in Featherston Buildings, Holborn. Here they were soon compensated for the real or apparent apathy of those from whom they might seem to have been entitled to look for kindness, by the active and effectual co-operation of many new friends. Among these, Dr. Priestley and Dr. Price were the foremost in activity and zeal, through whose exertions, aided by the generous liberality of Mr. Shore, Mr. Newton of Norton House, Mr. Milnes,

and some others, a room was quickly engaged in Essex House, Essex Street, which was fitted up as a temporary chapel, and public worship commenced in it early in April, 1774.

At Swinderby, on his way to London, Mr. Lindsey had met with a copy of Dr. Clarke's proposed amendments of the liturgy, which he made the basis of his own. This form of prayer, after passing through several editions, in the course of which it has received some further alterations and improvements, continues in use at the chapel in Essex Street, and also at the Unitarian Chapel in Little Portland Street, now under the ministration of the Rev. Edward Tagart. The plan adopted in its preparation was to deviate no further from the authorized liturgy than was necessary in order to fit it for the use of Unitarian worshipers; one principal object being to provide a form and place of public worship to which those might resort who had abandoned the Trinitarian doctrines, but were attached by education or otherwise to the services of the established church. To a certain extent it may be admitted that this design was accomplished; as the congregation at Essex Street was joined from the first by many churchmen, some of them distinguished for their rank, or for personal endowments of greater value. Several of these however withdrew from the unpopular sect and the obscure conventicle, after the first excitement and novelty was over; and there can be no doubt that a very large proportion of its pecuniary support has been always derived

from those who were by birth, as well as in all their principles and feelings, dissenters.*

* Several very distinguished exceptions to this remark ought not however to be overlooked. One of these was Mrs. Rayner, aunt to the late Duchess of Northumberland, who hearing by accident of the first opening of the chapel in Essex Street, repaired thither, and continued ever after one of the most zealous supporters of the cause, and a warm and bountiful friend both to Mr. Lindsey and to Dr. Priestley, who dedicated to her his "History of Early Opinions on the Person of Christ." She was a lady of large fortune, which gave her a power not more than equal to her earnest desire to do good. For she was accustomed to deny herself much of what others would have thought necessary to the maintenance of her rank and station, that she might have ampler means of promoting what she deemed the cause of humanity, virtue, and religion. Dr. Priestley may be supposed to have been in some measure biassed by gratitude for many substantial favours, but he is borne out by many concurring testimonies, when he describes Mrs. Rayner as one of the first Christian characters he was ever acquainted with, having a cultivated, comprehensive mind, equal to any subject of theology or metaphysics, intrepid in the cause of truth, and most rationally pious.

Another exception was found in W. Tayleur, Esq., of Shrewsbury; of whom Mr. Lindsey gives the following account in a letter to a friend, after returning from a visit to him. "We took a long flight thence (*i. e.* from Richmond, in Yorkshire) to Shrewsbury, but were well repaid when we arrived there by the sight and society of one of the most valuable of mankind, Mr. Tayleur, in whose house we lodged. He was educated at Westminster, and went off Captain of the school to Christ Church, Oxford, where he resided as student or fellow seven years, a hard and real student all the while; thence to the Temple for nearly as long a space. But an elder brother then dying, and the family estate coming to him, he married the late Sir Rowland Hill's sister, and settled at Shrewsbury. An excellent classic scholar, both in Greek and Latin, which he retains, and not unskilled in the Hebrew language. A very good mathematician also. His time and talents have always been much turned, but entirely of late years, to the Scriptures, of which he is a great master. A strict Unitarian, but of deep piety at the same time, without which,

Shortly after his arrival in London, Mr. Lindsey brought out his "Apology;" a work so named, not, as some have been apt to imagine, because he wished to *apologize* for the step he had just taken, but using the term in the sense in which it is employed by many of the early Christian fathers, who gave this title

opinions are of little value. If you have not heard of it, you will be glad to know, that some years past, when he could no longer attend the Trinitarian worship of the Church of England, and could not through long association join with edification in extemporary prayer, he had service for many Sundays in his own house, in which he officiated, at which some gentlemen of the Church of England attended, and some of Mr. Fownes's congregation who preferred a form of prayer; and this continued till Mr. F. yielded to the request of many of the congregation to admit the form they now use, with some additions made by him."

"You, Sir, (says Dr. Priestley, in his dedication to this gentleman of his 'Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever,') have always been happy in your attachment to mathematical and philosophical studies, but more so in your just preference of theological ones. These employ and brighten the evening of your life, as they did that of the great Newton, whose example, if it were necessary, would alone be a sufficient justification of us, in uniting two pursuits which are too often considered as the reverse of each other. You therefore naturally join with me in wishing to recommend to others those studies which give so much satisfaction to ourselves.

"Your attachment to the cause of genuine Christianity was conspicuous in your relinquishing a Trinitarian form of worship, and adopting a Unitarian one in your family, till you had procured it a more public and permanent establishment. Fortitude in such a cause as this, while the world in general is too ready to acquiesce in every thing that has the countenance of *fashion* and of *power*, is truly worthy of a Christian philosopher; and such an example as you have set, cannot be too generally known, being so rare, and therefore so much wanted. The great Newton, though a Unitarian, had not the courage to declare himself, and act as one."

to the statements which they prepared to be laid before emperors and governors, of the reasons for their belief in the Christian religion. The term is used in the same sense by Bishop Watson in his two well-known and excellent "Apologies" for the Bible and for Christianity, in answer to Gibbon and Paine. Perhaps the adoption of it was scarcely judicious in either case; because, as it is impossible for one or two writers to alter the prevailing custom of the language, the word naturally gives the unlearned reader an erroneous impression.

The design of this treatise, as remarked in the preface, is not merely to offer a vindication of the author's conduct on a particular occasion, but to promote that charity, without which a faith that can remove mountains is nothing,—and to excite some to piety, virtue, and integrity; in which the author would have accounted it far happier to succeed, than in making the largest number of proselytes to any opinions. After exonerating from all connexion with his obnoxious proceeding the general body of the associated clergy, many of whom blamed and earnestly remonstrated against it, he gives a short sketch of the origin and history of the doctrine of the Trinity to the time of the Reformation. He then treats of the state of the Unitarian doctrine, especially in our own country, from the era of the Reformation, with an account of those who have suffered on its behalf in various ways for conscience sake. In the next chapter he proves from Scripture that there is but one God, the Father, to whom alone religious worship is due; and shortly

examines some of the most remarkable texts from which an opposite inference has been drawn. He then traces the causes of the unhappy defection from the pure simplicity of Christian faith and worship, in the influence of vain speculations and science (falsely so called), and in the establishment of human authority in the church of Christ, exercising dominion over the faith and consciences of others. He proceeds to show how union in God's true worship is to be attained, and concludes with a concise but simple and affecting narrative of his own case.

This work was favourably received, and made a considerable impression upon the public mind. As might be expected, however, it was not allowed to pass without hostile, as well as friendly criticism,—from some who found fault with the author for quitting his station in the church, and from many who, at the same time that they admired the integrity and conscientiousness of his conduct, disapproved his opinions, and laboured to remove the impression which his book might leave in their favour. Among these, the most remarkable were Mr., afterwards Dr., Burgh, of York, Mr. Bingham, and Dr. T. Randolph, of Oxford. But their publications are none of them productions of much merit or value in a theological point of view, and the only direct notice which Mr. Lindsey thought it necessary to take of them was in the preface to his next work, entitled “A Sequel to the Apology.”

This publication, which appeared early in 1776, is the most elaborate, and in many respects the most valuable, of the author's contributions to dogmatic theology. He enters more at large than

was consistent with the plan of his former work into the scriptural evidence of the Unitarian doctrine, and the examination of those passages which are chiefly relied upon by its opponents. He argues strongly, not only against the high Athanasian system, but against the modified worship addressed to Christ by some Arians and Socinians, shewing that it has no countenance or authority from Scripture. He then enquires into the meaning of the word *logos*, as used in the introduction to St. John's Gospel, and endeavours to shew that it denotes not a divine person, or any distinct intelligent agent, but the wisdom and power of the Father, by which the world was made, and by which Christ and his apostles were inspired and enabled to perform their mighty works. The next chapter is devoted to a detailed examination of the passages in the New Testament which have been supposed to favour the pre-existence of Christ, and particularly those in St. John's Gospel. He afterwards argues very ably and conclusively against the strange notion maintained by some eminent Arian writers of a double meaning of the word Jehovah in the Old Testament, denoting as they supposed sometimes the supreme God, and at others a subordinate agent or messenger, to whom the delivery of the law and the whole administration of the Mosaic economy was entrusted. He particularly addresses himself to the refutation of this hypothesis as supported by the Rev. H. Taylor, rector of Crawley, in his very ingenious and learned treatise, entitled "The Apology of Benjamin Ben. Mordecai to his friends for em-

bracing Christianity;" one of the ablest and most plausible statements of the high Arian doctrine. But it is difficult to conceive, that any one, after giving to Mr. Lindsey's reply the attention it deserves, can continue favourable to a scheme so unsatisfactory and improbable. It is only justice to add, that in this instance, and on almost every other occasion, when Mr. Lindsey was called on to assume the character of a controversialist, he is uniformly guided by the spirit of candour and Christian meekness which were the most remarkable and characteristic features of his mind.

"I have now finished," says he in conclusion, "my examination of what Ben. Mordecai has advanced on this subject. I confess, from the first, I was concerned to differ from a writer so truly learned, able, and worthy; and I hesitated a long time, whether I should not pass by his work entirely. For it is composed with so much accuracy and judgment, and so vast a compass of learning is introduced upon the subject, that although I thought I saw his error through the whole, I might be doubtful of being able to develop it in such a manner as that others might see it. How far this has been done, my readers will judge. But assuredly I should have been far from engaging in an opposition to one who is so noble an advocate for the strict unity of God in his first letter, and in his last letters gives such a just and rational view of some of the principal doctrines of Christianity, if I had not believed that the sentiment concerning Christ which he defends, would, if it should prevail, retard the progress

of the gospel, which I saw him to have equally at heart with myself.”

The number of Mr. Lindsey's hearers continued to increase, and he was at length encouraged and enabled by the assistance of several friends to the cause, to purchase the premises, and to erect the present chapel in Essex Street, which was opened March 29, 1778. The congregation seemed now to be well established and settled on a fixed and permanent basis; it contained some persons of rank and opulence, and many of considerable eminence in other respects, by whom Mr. Lindsey was regarded with well-merited attachment and esteem. His writings had now established his reputation as a scholar, and as a theologian well versed in the argument of the cause for which he had sacrificed so much. By his residence in the metropolis, he was thrown into intimate connexion and intercourse with many excellent and distinguished persons, deeply interested in, and labouring to promote, the same important objects with himself, who not only respected his talents, but loved and esteemed him for the mild graces of the genuine Christian character which shone in his life and conversation. He was himself at ease,—free both to think and to declare what he thought, unshackled by subscriptions or obligations of any kind, except that which his conscience acknowledged to the God of all truth.

In all these respects, the surrender he had made of worldly station and emolument, would certainly seem to have led to a change for the better; and a kind Providence had already

guided him through a path, at one time apparently dark and unpromising, to results which *he* was doubtless prepared to receive as an adequate and abundant recompense. They were results, however, which he alone could duly appreciate, whose mind and heart were superior to mere temporal interests; and when his change was estimated by the only standard which the children of this world can understand or apply, it might still appear to be marked by loss and privation. For some years his income remained very limited in comparison with what it had been at Catterick, though it advanced by degrees, and he was at length placed in a situation not only to live with comfort, but in which he and Mrs. L. could again indulge to a considerable extent the benevolent dispositions of their hearts, which had heretofore contributed so much to their chief earthly happiness.

In 1779 Mr. Lindsey published a pamphlet, entitled "Two Dissertations on the Introduction to St. John's Gospel, and on the Lawfulness of Praying to Christ." The first of these was occasioned by some objections to the author's mode of investigation by Mr. Temple, of Richmond, in his very able and satisfactory reply to the attacks on the "Apology," by Burgh and Randolph. It chiefly consists of a repetition and fuller illustration of the statements already referred to, as given in the "Sequel to the Apology," derived for the most part from Dr. Lardner's celebrated "Letter on the Logos." In the second dissertation, the author shews with great force of reasoning that

religious worship is not due to Jesus Christ. For, that God is one person, the sole object of prayer,—that Jesus Christ is a man, and not God,—that he never taught men to pray to him, (it might have been added, that he positively forbade his disciples to pray to him, John xvi. 23, a fact which seems enough in itself to supersede every other argument or question upon the subject,)—that the worship of Christ is not deducible from his offices and powers,—that the apostles never teach that prayer is to be offered to him,—and that there is no sufficient precedent or example of praying to Christ recorded in the New Testament; under which head, the author gives an able, and in general a very satisfactory analysis of the texts commonly produced in favour of the worship of Christ.*

In 1781, Mr. Lindsey published a small volume, entitled "The Catechist." It is drawn up in the form of a dialogue between Eusebes, a humble inquirer, and Artemon, who is supposed to have had greater advantages and abilities for studying the Scripture, and consequently to be able to instruct and assist him. The design is "to shew by plain and easy deductions from the Scripture that Jesus and his apostles knew of no other God but the Father, and also that they never taught that there was any other being or person to whom we were to offer up our prayers but this heavenly Father of Jesus and of us all." In the preface the author introduces some judicious remarks on

* Belsham's Memoirs of Lindsey, p. 151.

the notion patronized by Mr. Gibbon, that St. John derived his idea of the Logos from the theology of Plato. How much more probable is it, that some of the early Christian converts, who were Platonists, should endeavour to accommodate the language of St. John in the beginning of his Gospel to their preconceived ideas, than that John, an obscure and unlearned Jewish fisherman, should adopt the language, or be acquainted with the system of Plato! "Mr. Gibbon," says our author, "exhibits a singular phenomenon in his own person as a writer; namely, a grave professed historian, whose character should be that of the most perfect impartiality, wearing a mask, and dissembling his real sentiments, that he may have the better opportunity to put on his own colouring, whenever he has occasion to treat of Christians and their religion. We may venture however to pronounce, that Christianity will owe great obligations to our ingenious author, though it was much beside his intention to serve it. For from the attention to the subject which has been excited by his writings, and the replies already given to some of the difficulties started by him, it is easy to see that the divine truth of the gospel will be promoted by the objections he has made to it, as it has been by all that have been made, from Celsus' time to our own." We need hardly add, that this prediction has since been amply fulfilled.

Mr. Lindsey's life had now assumed the uniform and tranquil course which was suitable to his mild and peaceful disposition; diversified by few remarkable incidents, and devoted to

the faithful discharge of his ministerial duties ; in which, though under widely different circumstances, and with an audience greatly superior in intellectual talent and education, he now met with an acceptance and success not inferior to what had attended him when connected with his congregation of simple country people at Catterick. That he took a deep interest in the progress of public affairs during this eventful period, will be readily imagined ; and though it was scarcely consistent with his character to take any very active part in the political contentions and strifes of the day, yet it may be anticipated that the intimate friend and associate of Price, Priestley, Jebb, Lee, and many others zealously engaged in the same cause, was warmly desirous of the success of every effort for the spread of civil and religious liberty,—and that he condemned with a sincere and deeply-felt sorrow, but devoid of all party rancour, the public measures by which it was sought to overthrow that cause on the other side of the Atlantic. At that period, however, he and other friends of free institutions little anticipated the results which were destined shortly to arise from the separation and independence of our colonies, or they would have earnestly recommended and promoted this separation in a peaceable and friendly spirit, instead of lamenting and deploring it, and seeking to perpetuate a union which was no longer in reality desirable for either party.

In the beginning of 1783, Mr. Lindsey was much gratified by the accession as a colleague in the charge of the Essex Street Chapel, of

his friend and relative by marriage, Dr. Disney, who had at length emancipated himself from the trammels of the state church by resigning his benefice, and from this time forward became an active and efficient fellow-labourer in the cause of religious truth. The first fruits of the comparative leisure which this event afforded him, was the publication of "An Historical View of the state of the Unitarian Doctrine and Worship from the Reformation to our own time; with some account of the Obstructions it has met with at different periods." This is a very interesting and valuable work, the fruit of the author's extensive reading and research on the subjects which occupied, and for the most part engrossed, his attention. The general design of it is the same as that of almost all his other writings, to promote the grand object of his life in impressing the great truth, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only proper object of divine worship; and he therefore avails himself of frequent opportunities which arise in the course of it, of illustrating different portions of the sacred writings which relate to this important question. It contains at the same time a collection of very curious historical and biographical facts, which have a bearing on the same object,—many of them previously but little known or accessible to the public in general; and by thus enabling the reader in some measure to trace the history of this faith,—to learn who and what they were who have professed it before him, and the circumstances which aided or impeded their attempts to diffuse it more extensively in former

times,—it may naturally tend to inspire him with a warmer and more lively interest in its present state and prospects. Perhaps it would have been better adapted for promoting this object, if it had more nearly corresponded to its title; if it had been more condensed in its style and systematic in its arrangement. The transitions from history to biblical criticism, or moral and practical reflections, or remarks on present and preceding writers, are often so sudden and abrupt, that the reader is at a loss to trace the connection, or to imagine the train of association which could connect the subjects together in the author's mind. It might have been better entitled, "Materials for a History of Unitarianism, especially in this country, during the last three centuries;" and when considered in this point of view, it will be found to contain a store of curious and interesting information, of great value to any one undertaking a work of this kind, which is still a desideratum in Unitarian literature. In the meantime, the volume is well fitted to instruct and gratify those who are interested in tracing the course of men eminent for wisdom, virtue, and piety in former times; and, containing much valuable information on a variety of topics more or less connected with the main subject, it may perhaps be not the less likely to make an impression upon many minds, for the incidental and desultory manner of its introduction.

Among the numerous answers, or attempts at answers, to the "Apology," perhaps the only one which appeared to have any prospect

of maintaining more than an ephemeral reputation, was the "Plea for the Divinity of Christ," by the celebrated Robert Robinson of Cambridge. The point at which the writer aims or professes to aim in this work, is the proof that Jesus Christ was truly and properly God. For this purpose he collects together the texts in which divine perfections are thought to be ascribed to Christ,—in which works, similar to those of Jehovah, are said to be performed by him,—in which divine homage is supposed to be paid to him. If Jesus be not God, he charges the writers of the New Testament with wilful misrepresentation in their manner of applying passages of the Old Testament relating to Jehovah; and contends in general, that many portions of Scripture have either no sense at all, or a very absurd one, upon any other supposition,—or in other words (for it amounts to this), that Jesus himself, and the apostles and evangelists must have been fools or knaves, if Mr. Robinson's inferences from their language are not admitted. The work is plausibly written, with a great air of candour and liberality towards his principal opponent, of whom he uniformly speaks in terms of high respect, and with a considerable infusion of that vivacity and spirit for which the productions of this writer were commonly so remarkable. Accordingly it was received with great applause, both by churchmen and dissenters, and was cried up for some time as unanswerable, not only by the multitude to whom it was professedly addressed, but by some from whom more discernment might have been ex-

pected. Among others, the learned Archdeacon Blackburne described it as subverting Mr. Lindsey's arguments and positions *a fundamentis*, and repeatedly enquired how they could possibly go on at Essex Street without answering this book.

As the "Apology" was the work principally attacked in the "Plea," Mr. L. was strongly urged to reply to it, but for some years declined on the ground that it was a very superficial performance, and needed no refutation. In fact, notwithstanding the favourable reception it met with, the "Plea" is after all a work of very inferior merit, and is by no means worthy of the otherwise well-deserved reputation of its author. The conclusion which the author seeks to establish is far from clear;—the Athanasian trinity he expressly disclaims; and though he acknowledges and contends for what he calls a scriptural trinity, he no where explains in what he supposes it to consist; and amidst all the strong language of apparent orthodoxy which he occasionally employs, an attentive reader will not fail to perceive that his argument favours the Sabellian rather than the proper Trinitarian hypothesis; a fact which, as we learn from his biographer Mr. Dyer, the author himself was not slow to admit. At length Mr. Lindsey was induced to undertake a formal reply to this work,—a task by no means difficult though somewhat tedious. For though, in travelling through the list of texts marshalled by the author in formidable array under each division of his subject, it was easy to shew that some were misapplied, others misunder-

stood, others mistranslated, or cited in implicit reliance on the accuracy of the authorized version, others spurious or of doubtful authority, &c.,—yet to complete the exposition necessary for the establishment of all these points, required much time and space, so that the reply is considerably larger than the original work, and of a character less calculated for extensive circulation or wide popularity. By all competent judges, however, the refutation must, we think, be admitted to be complete and decisive. At the same time it must also be acknowledged, that it occasionally betrays an asperity of manner and language not altogether correspondent to the ordinary mildness and gentleness of the author's character. Mr. Robinson never made any reply to the "Examination," and there is good reason to believe that it made a powerful impression upon his mind, though he is understood to have been at first a good deal hurt by the strength and severity of some of his opponent's expressions. At all events, it is well known, that in the closing years of his life he abandoned in a great measure the thin veil of orthodox language which the Sabellian scheme enabled him to assume, and became not only a decided, but an avowed Anti-trinitarian.

It is a circumstance worthy of being recorded, that about this period Mr. Lindsey had the disposal of a handsome preferment in the church, in the presentation to the rectory of Chew Magna in Somersetshire; a living of considerably greater value than that which he had himself quitted. This had been bequeathed to him without his knowledge many years be-

fore by Mrs. Pearce, an intimate friend of the Duchess of Somerset, during the period of his residence in that noble family. He could have disposed of his right to great pecuniary advantage, but chose rather to present the living to a worthy clergyman, Mr. Hall, who married the youngest daughter of Archdeacon Blackburne.

Mr. Lindsey's habits and tastes, it has already been observed, were by no means such as to lead him voluntarily to engage in personal controversy. When he did, it was either, as in the instance just mentioned, from the earnest solicitation of others, or from a feeling that the peculiar circumstances which had thrown him into a prominent situation, in some measure required it at his hands. Dr. Priestley, the leading champion of Unitarianism at that time, was in his judgment so competent to the task, that in general he was well contented to sit by, though doubtless assisting his friend amidst the arduous labours in which he delighted to engage, with his occasional opinion and advice. It appears indeed from Dr. Priestley's letters to Mr. Lindsey, inserted in Mr. Rutt's memoir of the former, that in various instances his rapid ardour and promptitude were happily tempered by the caution and cooler judgment of one so competent to advise, but not excited by a personal engagement in the dispute. Not that Dr. P. always acted according to the advice received; on the contrary it is evident that he frequently went beyond what his friend approved or thought prudent. It would have greatly increased the interest of the letters pub-

lished by Mr. Rutt, if Mr. Lindsey's part of the correspondence could have been added ; but this probably perished in the destruction of the riots, along with many other things which it would now gratify us much to see.*

Amidst the violence and misrepresentation to which Dr. Priestley was exposed, especially from some writers who seemed to think that their formidable antagonist was to be put down by assuming a lofty air of contempt, Mr. Lindsey at length stood forward in his defence, with a volume entitled "*Vindiciæ Priestleyanæ*, addressed to the Students of Oxford and Cambridge, by a late Member of the University of Cambridge." "The idea of drawing up the following tract," he tells us in the preface, "arose from observing a studied affectation in many persons of treating Dr. Priestley's theological and metaphysical writings with slight and contempt, and an endeavour in others particularly to infuse the like sentiments of him into the rising generation ; which last I could not but look upon as of pernicious consequence, tending to prevent their acquaintance with a

* Among the losses on this lamentable occasion was Dr. Priestley's part of a proposed new translation, or perhaps rather revised translation of the Scriptures, which he had undertaken in connexion with Mr. Lindsey and several other learned friends. What part of the work was allotted to Mr. Lindsey does not clearly appear, except a general superintendence and revival of the whole : Dr. P.'s own part was the *Hagiographa*, in which he had made considerable progress. The frequent references to it in the correspondence above alluded to, shew that it was a project on which he had very much set his mind. But his attention was afterwards so much occupied with a variety of other matters, that it was never resumed.

writer from whose various works, above those of any other of our country, they might reap the greatest advantage, both in respect of useful knowledge and virtuous improvement. I had no view therein, was I capable of it, of lending him any aid against the attacks made upon him, as if he were in danger of being overpowered by his opponents. For he is more than equal to a whole host of them; which they have all experienced in their turns; Bishop Horsley, one of the most violent of them, the least of all excepted. But I thought it might be possible for another to suggest some circumstances, and to say certain things in his behalf, which he would never think of offering, and which indeed could not so properly come from himself; by which the edge of prejudice might be taken off, and a juster estimate formed of him and his writings."

The author, however, having once entered into the subject, is led on considerably further than was absolutely necessary for his avowed purpose, and enters at some length into various points of the argument. In one chapter he makes some judicious remarks on the gloomy view of the moral and physical condition of the world presented in Bishop Butler's celebrated "Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion." This distinguished writer, though a man of deep piety and eminent talents, seems to have had an understanding perverted by prejudice and superstition, which led him to view the condition of the world, and the character and prospects of mankind, almost exclusively through a dark and sombre medium. The present scene he

represents as a *ruin*, bearing evident marks of the curse, which he supposes to have been denounced against it on account of the sin of Adam, and human nature as in a state of mental and moral degradation. All this our author protests against, and endeavours to shew on the contrary that notwithstanding many evils, arising chiefly from the folly and wickedness of individuals, the world is well adapted for training up its inhabitants in the dispositions which may fit them for a better state, and in the mean time amply stored with the instruments of such happiness as the present life admits of. "For my own part," says he, "I am bound to say, that my condition has been most happy, from the beginning of my existence to the present day. Happily preserved from great calamities, I have not been exempt from hardships, reverses, and sickness; but the kind hand of Providence has been discernible in them all, leading to good by them. I have most particularly cause to speak well of those of my fellow-beings whom I have been acquainted with, or among whom my lot has been cast, and I would desire no better company for ever than those I have known, and loved, and esteemed, and heard, and read of; especially when divested more of all selfishness, *terrene concretions*, as Edward Search calls them; which we expect, nay rather are persuaded will take place in our future progressive state. Indeed was there to be no such state, and all was to end here, though so dark and abrupt a conclusion of the fair promising scene is not credible, and would be wholly unaccountable, I must for my part take

my leave, and depart a well-satisfied guest; thankful that I had passed so many happy days, and lived, and seen and experienced so much of the goodness of my Creator, and been favoured with the knowledge of so many amiable and valuable characters among my species, though concerned to take a farewell for ever of the one and the other, and to know nothing any more.”*

The refutation of these gloomy notions is complete and satisfactory, and gives us a very pleasing impression of the writer's habitual turn of mind, which led him, notwithstanding many things which some men would have regarded only as sources of anxiety and discontent, to go on his way rejoicing in the conviction that he was in a Father's hand, and with a well-grounded persuasion that all the dispensations of his providence were ordered for the best.

A second part of the “*Vindiciæ Priestleyanæ*” appeared in 1790, addressed as before to the youth of Oxford and Cambridge, having the same general object, and branching off, like his former address, into a variety of discussions relating to the great points at issue between the Unitarians and other denominations of Christians. In the first chapter, the author gives a sort of analytical statement of the inference to be collected from the language of each writer of the New Testament, as to his views of the person, office, and dignity of his Master. The second chapter contains an account of the first

* *Vind. Priestleyanæ*, p. 256.

rise of the unscriptural doctrines which have since so generally prevailed, and which he traces in a great measure to the writings of Justin Martyr,—where we first meet, not with the fully matured Athanasian doctrines, but with the germ, which in the course of its development finally brought forth this grand corruption of the pure simplicity of gospel truth. In the third chapter, he gives a list of the false or suspicious readings, in which the original text of the New Testament appears to have been so altered as to countenance the notion of a Trinity, and also of mistranslations in our authorized version which have arisen from the influence of a prejudice in favour of this opinion. The whole work, though somewhat too bulky to be very effective for its professed object, contains a great store of valuable information, and much interesting discussion. Probably very few, comparatively speaking, of the numerous bodies to whom it was addressed, were at the pains to study it, or even saw the book at all; but those who did, would find in it much that was altogether new to them, and well fitted to excite serious reflections in all who were in a course of training as members and ministers of a Trinitarian state church.

In 1791 was established the Unitarian Society for the promotion of Christian Knowledge, by the distribution of books. “The object of this society was twofold; the first was, that the few who then professed the unpopular doctrine of the unrivalled supremacy of God, and that the Father alone is to be worshiped, and of the simple humanity of Christ, might have some

common bond of union, that they might know and support one another, and that they might thus publish their profession to the world, and excite that serious enquiry which would lead to the diffusion of truth. The second object of the society was, to print and circulate at a cheap rate, books which were judged to be best calculated to propagate right views of the Christian doctrine, and to apply it to the direction of the practice.”* This society, as at first planned, was on a comparatively small scale, comprising a very limited number of members; a number reduced beyond what had been originally contemplated or expected, by the introduction of the term *idolatrous* in the preamble to its rules; a term to which many warm friends of its general objects were strongly averse, when applied to the opinions and practice of their Trinitarian brethren, considering it as needlessly offensive, and, when taken in connexion with the ideas and feelings commonly associated with its use, implying an imputation against the abettors of the doctrines and worship most prevalent in the Christian world, which all would admit to be unfounded. The society was also unfortunate at its outset, during a period of more than ordinary party excitement, in the intimate connexion of several of its most active supporters with the political discussions and contests of the day; which afforded its adversaries a plausible handle for stigmatizing it as a mere political engine for subverting the established institutions of the country. Its ma-

* Belsham's Memoirs of Lindsey, p. 296.

nagers were afterwards more cautious in this respect; and its quiet and unobtrusive operations for many years were the means of widely diffusing many of the most valuable works of Unitarian writers, tending not merely to the adoption and profession of Unitarian principles, but to exhibit the evidence and divine authority of revelation in general, and to recommend the cultivation of Christian virtue and rational piety.

This society led the way to the establishment of a number of affiliated associations, most of which still subsist, and continue to be highly serviceable in furthering the cause of free inquiry, and rational views of gospel truth. Of the Unitarian Society, Mr. Lindsey was from the first an active member and supporter. Some years afterwards the Unitarian Fund Society was set on foot, which was more expressly devoted to the specific object of promoting the diffusion of Unitarian principles, by sending popular preachers as missionaries into different districts. This society also had Mr. Lindsey's best wishes, but he was by that time too infirm to take any active part in its management. A separate society was afterwards formed for protecting the civil rights of Unitarians. In process of time it was found that this complicated system of administration was cumbrous and inconvenient, and all these distinct institutions were amalgamated in the present Unitarian Association, which has now been for seventeen years a powerful and effective instrument in promoting the progress of Unitarian Christianity. May it long continue to be adminis-

tered under the Divine blessing on the same principles, and with more enlarged resources, in contributing to the same excellent and desirable object!

In the following year Mr. Lindsey published "Conversations on Christian Idolatry," suggested in part by the misunderstandings and offence which had been occasioned by the use of that term, as already stated in the preamble to the Unitarian Society's rules. These "Conversations," we are told, had their foundation in an incident which actually occurred, but the manner and circumstances are somewhat varied in the narration. A gentleman of eminence, in the legal profession, is introduced under the assumed name of Volusian,—from education and habit strongly attached to the Established Church, but without having made any careful enquiry into the truth of its doctrines, which he had been contented for the most part to take upon trust. Mention having been made of the then recent riots at Birmingham, Volusian, at the same time that he severely condemns such outrages, expresses a suspicion that Dr. Priestley may have excited the bad spirit against him by the intemperance and indiscretion of his own language; for example, by his public declaration that the worship of Christ was idolatrous. Having himself been brought up in the belief of the deity of Christ, he could not endure the rudeness and impertinence of one who told him that he was an idolater. Being asked whether he had ever searched the Scriptures to know how many Gods there were, or whether Jesus Christ was one, he acknowledged that he had

not made the Scripture his particular study, but left such matters to be settled by the clergy; on which Photinus, one of the company, earnestly exhorts him to enquire into the truth for himself, not to take matters of such importance upon trust, but to search diligently whether these things were so. Deeply impressed with this serious remonstrance, Volusian quits the party and passes several days of solitary retirement in a diligent examination of Scripture; in the course of which he finds to his great surprise, that the abundant evidence for the Trinity, the existence of which he had always taken for granted, could no where be found;—that the sacred writers every where spoke of Jehovah as one person, and the only God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that the few passages scattered here and there, which, when taken by themselves, appeared to favour a different conclusion, for the most part admitted of an easy interpretation in conformity with the general tenor of Scripture. He returns to his friends, and gives them a full account of the unwonted studies in which he had been engaged, with their unexpected result, which had brought him to the conclusion that God is strictly one, and the blessed Jesus his favoured creature and servant. Still he retains his dislike to the epithet idolatry, as applied to his former practice and profession, a term associated in his mind with something wicked and sinful, of which his conscience did not accuse him, though he now believed himself to have been in error. In the succeeding conversation this subject is accordingly dis-

cussed; it is shewn that idolatry, strictly speaking, means the offering divine worship to a being real or imaginary, who is not God; a practice which, though it never can be devoid of consequences more or less injurious, is not necessarily accompanied by the gross and shocking vices which stained the heathen idolatry of ancient times. The next enquiry is into the course which a person, situated as Volusian now finds himself, ought to pursue. One speaker counsels an entire secession from public worship, or else to attend the services of the church out of respect for established institutions, only adopting what you like, and leaving the rest to those who are edified by it. To this Photinus strongly objects, contending that though it might seem peevish and hypocritical to dissent for lesser matters, yet with respect to the great question of the object to whom the worship is to be addressed, no latitude is admissible. To this opinion Volusian at length assents, and declares his full conviction, that he can no longer with a quiet mind continue to frequent the worship of the Church of England, and say one thing with his mouth to the all-seeing God, while his heart and better knowledge mean another.—It is unnecessary to add that the argument is well maintained throughout; and the characters in the dialogue are not ill supported; though it may be thought a slight breach of verisimilitude, to represent a person of mature age, who had not before turned his mind to enquiries of this sort, and was besides under the influence of considerable prejudice, as brought back after three days' study, not only a convert to Uni-

tarianism, but well versed in the criticisms and reasonings of theological writers.

About the same period was published a new and revised edition of the Essex Street Liturgy, the same which, with comparatively slight alterations, continues still in use. The principal changes introduced at this time were the omission of the Apostles' Creed, and of the three-fold invocation at the beginning of the Litany. The omission of the Creed was justified by the following reasons: 1. Notwithstanding its name, it was not written by the Apostles, and is therefore of no authority. 2. It is very wrong and unwarrantable to put persons upon making a profession of their faith in assembling for Christian worship. 3. No man, or any number of men together, can have any authority to make a creed for others. 4. The imposition of creeds, in all ages, has been the source of great mischief and dissension, and a constant snare to honest minds who are tied down to them.

Mr. Lindsey was now advancing to the seventieth year of his age, and the twentieth of his connexion with this religious society. He was however a man of a remarkably alert and vigorous habit, and might have looked forward with as good reason as most men, to a prolongation for some years more, not of labour and sorrow, but of health and a capacity for active exertion in the station which he had so long happily and honourably occupied. Nevertheless, he had for some years looked forward to this, as the period of his destined retirement from public life; an object which he was not unreasonably anxious to accomplish, while it

could be done with a good grace, without waiting for the time when increasing infirmities made it a matter of necessity, and when the rapid decline both of mental and bodily powers, might be still more painfully sensible to others than it was even to himself. In July 1793, he accordingly took his final leave of the pulpit, and could never afterwards be induced to make his appearance there. On this occasion he prepared an interesting and suitable discourse, which however was not preached, but printed and distributed among the members of the congregation; it concludes in the following affecting and impressive, though simple terms.

“And now, brethren, I bid you finally farewell. Having for many years earnestly desired and endeavoured, however weakly, to serve you in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to promote your virtue and everlasting happiness, I commit you to God and his overruling Providence;—for however diligently others may plant and water, the increase and the fruits are to be expected from Him.

“I can never be sufficiently thankful to the bounty of Divine Providence, in raising up a number of serious and generous friends, when alone, and destitute of all means to set on foot this place of worship, to concur in the design, and for all the support contributed by them and others to the present day. Happy, thrice happy, if both they who have been called away before us, and we that are left, may be found worthy objects of the Divine mercy, and meet together at the resurrection at the last day, never to part more! And as no energies in the cause

of truth and virtue are lost, we may perhaps have the felicity to perceive, that we in our narrow spheres, have been honoured by being made instruments of good in the hands of our Maker. And particularly, that our humble and honest testimony against so early and lasting a corruption of the honour and worship due to Him alone, had its beneficial effect in the great scheme of his providence, in bringing forward that more perfect state of things which we look for, when knowledge shall increase and benevolence be universal."

Mr. and Mrs. Lindsey continued to reside in the house attached to the Chapel in Essex Street; the whole property having in fact been purchased by himself, aided by the contributions of his personal friends, though the premises had been made over by him to trustees in perpetuity, for the purpose of Unitarian Christian worship. Here he was still spared to pass a series of years in peaceful tranquillity, surrounded by attached and admiring friends; some of whom had been his fellow-labourers in the more arduous and active periods of his life; while others, now advancing to enter on the stations and duties which their predecessors were preparing to resign, delighted to contemplate the happy old age of one who was resting from his labours, ready to obey the summons with humble confidence and joy, whenever it should please the Supreme Disposer to call him hence.

Though Mr. Lindsey at no time took any *active* part in political affairs, it cannot be supposed that the important revolutions, portend-

ing still more momentous results, of the eventful period in which he lived, did not excite a warm and lively interest in his mind, especially when they more nearly involved some of his own most valued friends and connexions. Of these, none could more deeply affect him, than the departure for America of Dr. Priestley, which took place in the spring of the following year 1794. From the beginning of their acquaintance, they had been most intimate friends; differing widely in some points of mental character, but cordially agreeing in their opinions on the most important questions which can occupy the attention or stimulate the exertions of man, and entertaining the most perfect esteem and confidence, they were admirably fitted to act together as servants of that great cause which each had at heart, far above all worldly or temporal interests. Since Dr. Priestley's removal to Hackney in 1791, their personal intercourse had been one of the most valuable ingredients in the happiness of each; and the separation which was now to take place, at their time of life, to all appearance, as in fact it proved, a final one, could not but affect most deeply the hearts of both.

Mr. Lindsey however was not prevented by a sense of his own loss from approving the motives which led his friend to this step; a step which many others at the time, not only regretted, but conceived to be altogether uncalled for by the circumstances of his own case, or by the prevailing current of public opinion. It is probable, indeed, that the ruling powers of the day had not *then* any intention or desire to

give him further disturbance; but after what had already been done in the cases of Palmer and of Winterbotham, it seemed that no reliance could be placed upon this; and the state of public feeling and political excitement was then, and continued for some years afterwards, to be such, that in remaining here, his personal security might often have had no better guarantee than the forbearance of a Secretary of State. Personally, few could be greater losers by the departure of his excellent friend, than Mr. Lindsey. "It will cut off," says he in a letter to Dr. Toulmin, "a great source of the highest satisfaction to me among many others. But I hope that it will be for his greater good and contentment upon the whole; as his family are gone before him, and I have for some time thought that his chief business was done here, and we were no longer worthy of him, and that he might be of eminent service to that other country, retaining still in great vigour his powers of body and mind,—and there can be no doubt of the intimate friend of Franklin being there well received."

Whether these expectations were altogether realized to the extent and in the manner which was anticipated, may be somewhat doubtful; but there is good reason to think that in the seclusion of the very retired situation where he ultimately placed himself, Dr. Priestley enjoyed leisure to complete various important labours of which we have since reaped the benefit, and which he might never have been able to accomplish in the midst of the bustle, the excitement, and the varied occupations and engagements

which would have almost engrossed his time if he had remained here. He maintained a close and frequent correspondence with Mr. Lindsey, till his death in 1804; and there, as well as here, communicated to him without reserve, all his projects and labours. Several of Dr. Priestley's works, published in America, were reprinted in this country under Mr. Lindsey's superintendence; particularly the "Reply to Paine's Age of Reason," to which he prefixed an interesting preface, the chief object of which was to vindicate the character of his absent and much-injured friend, from the calumny and groundless imputations with which party spirit and bigotry were not slow to follow him even across the Atlantic. Of this mark of friendship Dr. P. expresses his grateful sense in the following terms: "It is not long since I received the copy of your edition of my answer to Paine. I read the preface with much emotion, from a sense of the friendship to me expressed in it. If I had laboured ten times more than I have, I should not have thought it too much for such a reward."

The succeeding years of Mr. Lindsey's advancing age passed on in calm and peaceful tranquillity, little diversified except by the undiminished interest which he continued to feel in whatever tended to promote the cause of truth and virtue, of human happiness and improvement. He now occupied a portion of his leisure in preparing an instructive and valuable treatise, entitled "Conversations on the Divine Government," which appeared in 1802. In this work the same real or imaginary person-

ages are introduced as in the former series of "Conversations on Christian Idolatry;" to which it may in fact be considered as in some sense a sequel. It relates to a train of interesting reflections which could scarcely fail to present themselves to candid and serious minds deeply imbued with rational and scriptural views of revealed religion, and to various important, but in some respects difficult questions connected with the moral government of God, to which such views only could suggest anything approaching to a satisfactory answer.

"The following work," he tells us in the preface, "results from the study and experience of a long life, devoted principally to the service of the Gospel. From diligent researches into the true meaning and spirit of the sacred writings, the author has been led to various deviations from the creed of the Established Church; his opinions have at different times been laid before the public, and if the discouragements attending the profession of his faith have been very considerable, he is happy and thankful to have lived in a country where not only such appeals have been practicable, but he has been supported by several of his countrymen, who, renouncing the error of their education, have openly avowed their faith in only one God,—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"The gloomy and unjust ideas which some entertain of the Divine Being,—the avowed or restrained doubts of others with respect to the sacred history of the first ages,—led him to turn his attention to such facts and arguments as by others as well as himself have been found

satisfactory. The importance of the subject may be an apology for some repetitions; and till a full conviction is wrought in the mind, that the government of this world is the wisest that could have been adopted, and that the evils and distresses of life are not permitted but for the good of all, the attention of the public cannot be too often solicited for the vindication of our Creator."

Without entering into a detailed analysis of this work, it may be sufficient to observe that its general object is to vindicate the character of the divine benevolence. This he represents as the fundamental principle on which the whole administration of the universe is conducted, and into which all the other moral attributes which we ascribe to the divine nature may be resolved. He gives an interesting sketch of the proofs which we may derive from the works of creation and the course of Providence; that the Lord is good, and that his tender mercies are over all his works; and afterwards proceeds to apply this principle in a view of the dispensations of God as made known in the Scriptures, for the final establishment of pure religion among men; endeavouring to shew the tendency of the divine communications to Noah, to Abraham, and to Moses, in promoting this great object; and even vindicating, in this point of view, the extermination of the Canaanites, on the supposition that it was, as represented in the history of the Old Testament, an act of obedience to the divine command. Without admitting that the author has failed in this latter part of his argument; (and those, who must

needs justify every act of violence committed by the Israelites, under the belief that they were therein acting under the direction and authority of Jehovah, must at least allow there is a serious difficulty in their way;) we may observe, that it seems hardly consistent with the objection afterwards made to the conduct of Mohammed in propagating his religion by the sword: "That he should take such a horrible way to put down idolatry, and propagate the knowledge and worship of one God only, by the sword and utter destruction, where any refused or hesitated to embrace his new religion when proposed to them, was to proclaim immediately the falsehood of his own pretensions to be a prophet from God, to all who had a right discernment what God is. For it is impossible that a Being, in whom dwelleth the most perfect truth and goodness, can be pleased with, or approve, the compelling of his mistaken and misjudging creatures to abandon their errors concerning himself by outward force and intimidation; for these can only produce a feigned assent, and not real conviction, which can alone be brought about by argument and persuasion."

He afterwards establishes with great cogency of argument and beauty of illustration the important principle, that all things are from God—that evil as well as good is not only permitted, but appointed by infinite wisdom, for the most excellent and desirable purposes. The wrath of man is made to work out the righteousness of God, and the remainder of wrath doth he restrain. This great doctrine however, fertile as

it is in important practical results, and essential to the most consolatory views of our condition, as the subjects of an all-perfect and omnipotent Being, cannot be cleared of the most alarming and frightful consequences, except on the supposition that all punishments in a future state, as well as in the present, are of a remedial character, intended to wash out the stains of sin, to purify the heart from all evil affections, and finally to bring our souls to God. The scriptural argument for this glorious and consoling doctrine is then distinctly and concisely stated; and the work closes with an examination of the grounds for believing in the existence of a supposed powerful wicked spirit or devil, to whose malignant influence so many are accustomed to ascribe the prevalence of moral, if not of natural, evil in the world. The insufficiency of this evidence is exposed, and the conclusion finally deduced, that there is no such being; but that the evil which is in the world is produced from men's evil passions and dispositions, which are therefore called his works. "There is therefore no evil in the world but what takes its rise from men themselves; nor any devils, but so far as men extremely wicked and abandoned may deserve that name; and to uphold such evil beings, is to engraft heathenism upon Christianity."

To many readers some of the arguments and proofs in this treatise will probably appear inadequate, and some objections not quite so effectually removed as could be wished; but the general spirit of the work is highly excellent and admirable. It is peculiarly interesting,

as containing the last thoughts of an eminently pious, benevolent, and enquiring mind on a variety of subjects of great practical importance. Whatever we may think of some of the details, the great principle of the complete supremacy of an infinitely wise and good Being, relatively to whose moral administration of the universe *all is right*, who designs the final destruction of temporary and partial evil, and the restoration of all intelligent creatures to a state of continual progress in every thing excellent and good,—this doctrine is such as no one can do otherwise than wish to be true; and the earnest, persuasive, and often eloquent manner in which the venerable author enforces and recommends it, cannot fail to excite the most pleasing impressions of his pious, candid, benevolent, and truly Christian spirit.

It has already been mentioned, that Mr. L. continued till near the verge of fourscore in the enjoyment of tolerably uniform and regular health; but he now began to experience occasional warnings of approaching change. At length in December 1801, he suffered a severe paralytic attack, which for the time excited the greatest apprehension. Although he recovered, so far as to be able to put the finishing hand to his last interesting work, from this time he gradually declined in bodily vigour, but he was in general free from pain, and his faculties for some time were not impaired. His allotment henceforth was that of tranquil rest, little interrupted by uneasiness of any kind, except what might be caused by the consciousness of inability any longer to exert himself as

formerly in his Master's service. But he could look back on a long life well spent, and awaited with patience the hour when it should please God to summon him to his reward. The death of his most valued friend Dr. Priestley, who though ten years his junior was called away before him, he bore with the calm resignation and composure of one who relies without hesitation on Gospel promises, in a full persuasion that, the time could not be very remote, practically speaking, when they should be raised to meet again, in a better state, to part no more. His condition, about a twelvemonth after this time, is well described in the following pleasing terms by his attached friend Mrs. Cappe.

“In returning home, I staid some time in London, and had a lodging in Essex Street, near my old friends Mr. and Mrs. Lindsey, with whom I spent a considerable portion of every day, with more complete satisfaction and uninterrupted enjoyment than I had ever done since their leaving Catterick. Often did we look back on those trying scenes, as on a troubled sea, long passed in safety; and the only sentiment excited by the retrospect, was that of ardent gratitude to the merciful hand, by whose guardian care, through the course of a long eventful period, we had hitherto been preserved in peace and comfort! I had the satisfaction of keeping the birth-day of my venerable aged friend, then entering on his eighty-third year. He was become very feeble, in consequence of repeated slight paralytic attacks; and his eyesight failed him so greatly, that it was not in his power to read much, or for any long time

together ; yet such is the force of habit, that he delighted to sit with a book open before him, that he might refer to it whenever he found himself able. He had still great pleasure in hearing the discussion of literary, moral, or religious subjects, by the numerous friends, some or other of whom generally visited them every day ; and although he could no longer take an active part in the diffusion of pure religion and virtue, the great object of his whole life, he could still instruct by his patience, cheerfulness, and resignation, under the growing infirmities of old age, and supply a living example of the character pointed out to imitation, by the royal bard of Israel : ‘ Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.’ ”

From this period his infirmities continued to increase ; but though at times he suffered much, yet by the constant attention and skill of his brother in law Dr. Blackburne, and the tender, judicious, and unwearied care of Mrs. Lindsey, he continued on the whole in a comfortable state, and to the last week of his life enjoyed the society of his friends, though he was not then able to support much conversation with them. At length, on Thursday, November 3, 1808, he was released from the sufferings of mortality, and called to that state where pain and sickness shall be known no longer.

In reflecting on the various merits of this excellent and truly venerable person, our attention is chiefly directed, not so much to his learning and talents (though these were very considerable), as to the amiable qualities of his

heart,—his warm and diffusive benevolence,—his uprightness and integrity,—his supreme regard for the paramount obligations of truth and conscience,—his pure and humble, but calm and unostentatious piety. If a Unitarian were called on to vindicate, by examples, the claim of his faith to the character of vital and practical Christianity, among the first names to which he would point with confidence would certainly be that of *Lindsey*; though it may be hoped that he would not be contented to use it thus, as an instrument to silence the gainsayer, but be at all times solicitous to place the bright pattern before him as a memento, and seek to be a follower of him, inasmuch as he was a follower of Christ.

JOHN JEBB,

ONE of the brightest stars in this constellation of worthies,—whether we regard his distinguished talents and learning, the manly independence of his spirit, or the soundness of his principles as a citizen, a man, and a christian,—was born Feb. 16, 1736. He was the eldest son of Dr. John Jebb, Dean of Cashel, in Ireland, and of Ann, daughter of Daniel Gansel, Esq., of Donnyland Hall, near Colchester, in Essex. After receiving his preparatory education at various grammar schools in Ireland and England, but chiefly at Chesterfield, he was admitted pensioner in the University of Dublin, in 1753. Here, however, he remained only one year, being afterwards removed to St. Peter's College, Cambridge, where he entered Nov. 9, 1754; and being entitled, according to the rules of the university, to the terms he had kept at Dublin, he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in January, 1757. That his proficiency was very considerable, notwithstanding the desultory plan of his education, which to many youths would have been a serious disadvantage, is proved by his having attained on this occasion the rank of second wrangler; which, when it is considered that the first place on the list was occupied by the celebrated Edward Waring, afterwards one of the first mathematicians of

his time, is not without reason regarded by his biographer, Dr. Disney, as equivalent to the highest honour in ordinary years.

Immediately on taking his degree, Mr. Jebb undertook the charge of private pupils; an employment in which he continued to be engaged during many subsequent years of his residence at the university. He was, however, not less unremittingly attentive to the studies necessary for his own improvement, and participated in the honours provided to stimulate those who aspired after academical distinction, in the pursuit of the literary and scientific acquirements by which they were to be attained. In 1760 he proceeded to the degree of Master of Arts, and in the following year was elected a Fellow of his College. In 1762 he was admitted into deacon's, and in 1763, into priest's orders, by Dr. Green, Bishop of Lincoln.*

In the following year he was elected by the university to the rectory of Ovington, in Norfolk, and shortly afterwards married Ann, daughter of the Rev. James Torkington, rector of Little Stukely, in Huntingdonshire. This lady proved to be a most suitable help-mate to him; uniting to superior powers of mind a warm interest in his pursuits, and a correspondence of sentiments and views, which rendered her a most valuable

* We cannot introduce, even in this casual manner, the name of this worthy prelate, and truly excellent and liberal man, without recording, that when the Dissenters' application for relief from subscription to the doctrinal articles of the church, as the condition of their toleration, first came before the House of Lords, Green stood alone among his brethren to support it, while even Law and Shipley hung back.

assistant and support in the most trying circumstances of his subsequent life. She even wielded the weapons of controversy, and with no mean effect, during the animated discussions excited by her husband's exertions to procure a reform in the course of academical instruction and discipline. In some papers under the signature of Priscilla, she replied to Dr. Hallifax and Dr. Powell, with an acuteness and success, which drew from Paley the appropriate and characteristic exclamation, "The Lord hath sold Sisera into the hand of a woman!" Mrs. Jebb survived her husband many years, and died, at an advanced age, in 1812.*

In 1765, Mr. Jebb published, in conjunction

* A Memoir of Mrs. Jebb was published by Mr. G. W. Meadley, the biographer of Paley.

"The talents of Mrs. Jebb," says this writer, "were so blended with an amiable softness; her ardour and firmness so tempered with gentleness and urbanity, that while her friends were numerous, it was impossible she could have a single enemy among those who knew her. In her friendships she was ardent and sincere; entering warmly into the hopes and disappointments, and rejoicing in the good fortune of those to whom she was most intimately attached. Owing indeed, in her latter years, so much to the attention of others, she repaid them with a grateful heart, and was apt to forget her own sufferings in anxiety for the welfare of her friends.

"She had a nice and even scrupulous sense of honour and propriety, and a delicacy of mind which admitted no compromise with that masculine boldness, in which some females of a highly cultivated intellect have at times indulged. Though so long infirm, that her life had been a series of rarely intermitted suffering, she had none of that querulousness which seeks pleasure in tedious and unprofitable complaint to those around; and she was equally devoid of every wish to interfere in the concerns of others, unless very delicately, from unaffected benevolence, and with a reasonable hope of doing good."—*Memoir, &c.* p. 55.

with two learned friends, Mr. Thorpe of Peter House, afterwards Archdeacon of Northumberland, and the Rev. George Wollaston of Sidney College, a Commentary on those parts of Newton's Principia which more immediately relate to the system of the world ; under the title of "*Excerpta quædam e Newtoni Principiis Philosophiæ Naturalis, cum Notis Variorum.*" This is a work which has been well described as wanting nothing but its continuation. It was very favourably received at the time, by those most competent to judge of its merits ; and was for many years in general use in the course of academical instruction in the University from whence it proceeded. In consequence of the changes which a conformity to continental usage has latterly introduced, not in the principles of the science, but in the modes of representing and expressing them, this, and most of the other treatises founded immediately on the original work of Newton, are fallen into comparative desuetude as media of instruction ; but as a work of general science, it is still held in high and well-deserved repute.

It would not be advisable to introduce here any more extended notice of this treatise, not merely because it is less intimately connected with the general object of the present work, but because it is impossible now to assign their respective portions of it to the members of the distinguished triumvirate engaged in its preparation. That Mr. Jebb should have been engaged in such an undertaking at all, and with such coadjutors, is however alone a proof of the high estimation he had acquired as an emi-

nent proficient in the prevailing pursuits of that seat of mathematical learning. His own talents as a teacher are understood to have been very considerable; and in the discharge of this part of his duty, while unfolding the elements of natural science, he did not fail to direct his pupils to those striking and impressive views which they suggest of the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty Creator, and the extent and magnificence of his operations. The high estimation in which Mr. Jebb was held in this capacity, may be inferred from the fact of his having been five times nominated one of the moderators, whose duty it is to preside alternately at the public exercises of the students, and to examine them at the time of their offering themselves for their degree.

Amidst his other occupations, Mr. Jebb had devoted considerable attention to the study of the Arabic language; and on this ground, at the death of Mr. Chappelow, Professor of Arabic, in January 1768, he offered himself as candidate for the vacant Professorship. The competitors for the office were few, and his prospects of success were favourable; but a rival candidate arose in the person of one who from previous intimacy and near relationship might have been expected to befriend him, but who, though nowise qualified by superior knowledge of the subject, and in fact mainly devoted to other and very different pursuits, was enabled by more powerful interest among the heads of houses to carry the election. This was Dr. Samuel Hallifax, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester; and on all occasions a vehement partizan

of the "conservative" system both in the church and the University, in opposition to the "alarming hand of reformation."

In November of the same year, Mr. Jebb commenced his first course of lectures on the Greek Testament; which he proposed to give to such of the undergraduates as might be desirous to attend on them. His professed object in this undertaking was, to do something towards supplying what he justly considered as a most serious deficiency in the Cambridge plan of instruction, in the absence of any means for drawing the attention of the young men to biblical studies, or furnishing them with even the elements of scriptural knowledge. He was peculiarly well qualified for the employment; and, as long as he was permitted, he persevered in it, doubtless to the great advantage and improvement of those who resorted to him, and to his own satisfaction in the consciousness of having at least intended and endeavoured to be of service. That he did not also enjoy the further reward which might have been expected, from the countenance and support of the authorities, was to him a matter of inferior moment. As the governors of a Protestant University, it might perhaps have been supposed that an undertaking which was designed to aid the diffusion of a knowledge of the Scriptures, and to promote the study of those sacred books which are alone acknowledged as containing the records of Divine revelation, would have met with some favour in their eyes. But, in the genuine spirit of an establishment, they looked with suspicion and

jealousy on all attempts of this kind, which were not accompanied with an engagement at all events to support a certain specified system of doctrines. A cry of heresy was raised against the scheme; accusations were everywhere multiplied against its author, which were too much regarded by those whom the world looks up to with respect; and his endeavours to exculpate himself from the various aspersions thrown upon his conduct, were received with evident marks of prejudice. At length, several of the leading characters in the University having gone so far as openly and absolutely to prohibit every individual *in statu pupillari* in their respective colleges from attending these lectures, Mr. Jebb thought it necessary to appeal to the public in his own defence and in recommendation of the plan. He accordingly published in 1770, "A Short Account of Theological Lectures now reading at Cambridge; to which is added, a New Harmony of the Gospels."

It is scarcely necessary to say that this pamphlet is written in a style worthy of the scholar, the theologian, and the Christian; and to a person who came to its perusal with a spirit already favourable to the principles of free and unbiassed inquiry on which it proceeds, its statements could not be otherwise than satisfactory. But the very same strain of reasoning and reflection which was most acceptable to such readers, would only be "confirmation strong" to the suspicions of those who saw in every attempt to teach or induce men to think for themselves, a covert attack on the authority of the church. It is impossible to suppose that

our author was not before this time sufficiently well acquainted with the prevailing spirit and temper of this party, to be fully aware that they were not to be conciliated by any thing short of a complete surrender; because the very points of his scheme, on which he justly set the greatest value, and which he regarded as the most essential to its success, were precisely those which above all others excited their jealousy and hostility. The mere fact of his pamphlet containing incidental recommendations of the labours of Priestley, Taylor, Benson, Lardner, and Farmer, would alone be enough to convince readers of this latter class, (supposing that they knew enough of "dissenting divinity" to have heard of these names at all,) that their alarms were not ill grounded;—without needing the additional confirmation of the following statement:—

“In the course of this employment, I have not been anxiously desirous to inculcate the same system of faith and practice which appeared to me to be most reasonable. I have rather made it my endeavour, that those gentlemen who favoured me with their attendance, should be provided with proper materials for striking out a system of faith and practice for themselves. And to this end I exhorted them to study the Scriptures with the same industry, and freedom from prejudices of every sort, which I am conscious of having exercised in my own inquiries.

“If the consequence has been, that the train of ideas arising in the minds of my pupils from such an inquiry,—that the conclusions drawn

from such a review, do not agree in every instance with what the same Scriptures seemed to suggest in the time of our great reformers,—the fact may be accounted for, from the superior advantages which the present age may draw from the labours of many learned men, who have arisen since that period; and from a variety of other sources, which must crowd upon the mind of every candid thinking person, without having recourse to the axioms and groundless supposition of my professedly inculcating a set of opinions in opposition to the doctrines of the established church.”*

Independently of the interest which attaches to this publication from its spirited assertion of the right of private judgment, and the duty of inquiry in order to exercise that right properly, it is valuable to the scriptural student as containing a sketch of the method of instruction adopted by so eminent a master in these pursuits. In reading the Gospels (to which, with the exception of 1 Cor. xv., his course was confined), his first step was to communicate to his pupils in successive portions the outline or skeleton of a harmony prepared by himself, consisting merely of a series of references to the passages in the different evangelists which appeared to him to correspond, and arranged from first to last according to what he conceived to be the true chronological order. After examining and comparing at his leisure the accounts of the different evangelists referred to in the first article of his paper, the student was expected to embody the substance of them in

* Jebb's Works, i. 25.

one paragraph in his own words, and so on from article to article, forming in this manner by degrees a continued narrative of the life and doctrines of Jesus. If any difficulties arose, they were made the subjects of discussion at the succeeding lecture, or were considered, and if possible removed, by the examination of the parallel passages of other places of Scripture where similar words or expressions are used; or, failing these means, by a reference to commentators, chiefly critical and historical, rather than doctrinal.

It will occur as an objection to this plan, that the student is led to follow implicitly the lecturer's system in harmonizing the gospel narratives; whereas he would probably derive much more essential benefit from the careful study, and laborious and minute examination and comparison, which would be called into action in constructing a harmony for himself. And this is true; but it should be remembered that the author's object was not to mark out a course of inquiry which should meet the wants of the student in divinity, but to furnish such information as it was conceived that no person liberally educated, whatever his destination or profession might be, ought to be without. As for the plan of studying the gospel history by means of the preparation of an original harmony, the careful examination and reflection it would require, might doubtless serve indirectly to impress on the memory a thorough knowledge of the facts themselves; but it may be doubted whether in other respects it would be worth the labour; since it does not appear that

the evangelists have been attentive to the order of time and place, or have supplied us with such *data* as can be relied upon in reducing their separate memoirs to the form of one continued narrative. If it were so, it might well excite our surprise, that no two of the great number who have made the attempt, should have agreed in the results they have obtained.

In 1770, Dr. Hallifax being removed to the chair of Civil Law, the Arabic professorship again became vacant, and Mr. Jebb a second time brought forward his pretensions. But he had now made himself unacceptable to the higher powers on his own account, and his application was once more unsuccessful. Whether it was apprehended that he might introduce the hated spirit of free inquiry under the disguise of lectures on the Koran, does not appear; at all events, he was condemned to suffer the usual fate of a reformer.

About this time, he was instituted, on the presentation of W. Adair, Esq., of Flixton Hall, to the vicarage of Flixton, and the adjacent rectories of Homersfield and St. Cross, near Bungay, in Suffolk. Here he resided during the summer; but for some years continued his connexion with the University of Cambridge. He persevered under every possible discouragement, through evil report and good report, with his lectures on the New Testament; till they were at length deserted by those for whose benefit they were intended, and whose improvement they were in many respects admirably fitted to promote; but who were deterred from seeking instruction in a form which would give

serious offence to those on whose favour their own prospects in life might in a great measure depend.

During the remaining years of Mr. Jebb's connexion with the University, a great part of his attention was occupied in repeated and earnest attempts to procure various reforms in her system of discipline, particularly the introduction of annual public examinations. It would be tedious and uninteresting to go through the detail of his successive efforts for the accomplishment of this favourite scheme, all of which were frustrated, partly through the increasing jealousy of the ruling powers, as it became daily more and more evident that the promoter of the measure was diverging widely from the authorized standards of faith; and partly from the prevailing influence of that spirit of "conservatism," which, though unable or unwilling to discuss the merits of any proposed change, assumes that established usage must be right, and innovation consequently dangerous and wrong. It may be added, that though the public examinations recommended by Mr. Jebb have never been adopted, yet the introduction of annual examinations in most of the separate colleges has, it is believed, to a considerable extent answered the purpose which he had in view.

Early in 1771, the design was formed of applying to Parliament to procure relief from subscription to the thirty-nine articles, of which a short account has already been given. That Mr. Jebb took a warm interest in this application, and was active and zealous in promoting

it, will be readily supposed. The liberality of his views, the manly independence of his character, and his ardent energetic temper, combined to impel him to this course; for it was not in his nature to remain a mere passive well-wisher to any cause or undertaking in which he was deeply interested. Some of the most important papers and declarations which were circulated by the petitioners proceeded from his pen. Besides a great variety of fugitive pieces under different assumed signatures in the newspapers of the day, he also published two able pamphlets in connexion with this controversy: "An Address to the Gentlemen of the University of Cambridge who intend proposing themselves in the ensuing January as Candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts;" and, "A Letter to Sir W. Meredith, on the subject of Subscription: by an Englishman." The former in particular was well calculated to rouse the slumbering consciences of those to whom it was addressed, by the startling view which it gave of the serious responsibility incurred in thus solemnly subscribing their unfeigned assent and consent to a multitude of disputable propositions on the most important of all subjects, which they were so far from having duly weighed and examined, that the great majority had not even read them. The latter contains a distinct and able statement of the general question, proceeding from one who was thoroughly master of the argument by which the impropriety of the practice is so clearly made out. One of the points on which it chiefly dwells is the inconsistency of the requisition itself, in the

rigour of its demands in some cases, contrasted with its unaccountable laxity in others, where it might be thought to be more especially required. Thus, while doctors of civil law, of medicine, and even of music, are required to express a decided opinion on the doctrines of the church, which it is neither supposed nor pretended that they have ever examined, a bishop is permitted to enter on the duties of his exalted station without publicly declaring his adherence to the constitution of that church whose highest office he is about to administer.

The critical period of Mr. Jebb's life was now fast approaching. In his estimation, independence, simplicity and godly sincerity, and a good conscience before God and men, were above every other consideration; and it is not difficult to anticipate the natural effect, on a mind like his, of the engagements in which he had been now for some years so deeply occupied. The discussions in which they involved him,—the reflections they suggested,—the temper of the times, as indicated by the vehement opposition made to the most moderate and reasonable plans of reform, and his own growing dissatisfaction with the doctrines and discipline of the church, at length fully convinced him that the call of duty left him no other alternative but to retire; to abandon at whatever sacrifice the station he was so competent to fill, as a clergyman of the established church. As early as August 1773, Mr. Jebb communicated to a few select friends his intention to resign his preferments; nor was such resignation delayed but on account of reasons which

were both disinterested and powerful. His mind, however, at this time suffered under much inquietude, while struggling under the demands of duty and the obligations of personal attachment. "I own," says he, in reply to an anonymous opponent, "I find the sensations of conjugal and paternal love opposed to the sense of duty. If the refuter likes this concession, let him enjoy it; but he will triumph at the expense of his humanity."

The actual resignation, from various motives, some of which are hinted at in the preceding extract, did not take place till September 1775. In the meantime, however, he took a deep and lively interest in the course pursued by Mr. Lindsey, who had cordially united with him and many other excellent and distinguished men in the petition for relief from subscription, and who now led the way in relinquishing a station of which he could not discharge the duties without at least giving his sanction to doctrines which he inwardly, indeed avowedly, believed to be false and unscriptural. Even if the application of the petitioning clergy had been successful, it cannot be doubted that both he and Mr. Jebb would have been fully sensible that their own position and duty were not materially affected, because the necessity of not only conforming to, but officiating in, a Trinitarian liturgy, would have remained the same. On the other hand, it is probable that not a few of the petitioners were induced to join in that measure from no dissatisfaction with the doctrines themselves to which their subscription was required; and therefore felt that its rejec-

tion, however they might regret and disapprove it, laid them under no obligation to abandon their present stations, or even to refrain from aiming at further advancement. Several of these were afterwards elevated to high stations on the episcopal bench; and in later times of political excitement, seem on several occasions to have retained but faint traces of the liberal spirit of their earlier years.

Mr. Lindsey's resignation preceded by nearly two years that of his friend; to whom however all his plans were communicated, and from whom, in conjunction with two other excellent friends at Cambridge, Mr. Tyrwhitt and Mr. Lambert, he received much valuable advice and assistance. As we have already stated, it was his earnest wish to have engaged Mr. Jebb as his colleague at Essex Street. This overture he declined, having at that time different views which were not destined to be realized. But when he afterwards came to reside in London, he was a constant attendant on Mr. Lindsey, and frequently expressed his happiness and comfort in the opportunity of joining in a service and worship he so much approved.

Previous to his retirement, Mr. Jebb, in letters to various friends, communicated his determined purpose, and the reasons of it. In a letter to Dr. Chambers,* written soon afterwards, he

* This excellent person was Rector of Achurch, in Northamptonshire, and though he did not resign his benefice, is included by Mr. Lindsey in the honourable list of Unitarian Confessors (see *Historical View*, p. 486). He did not hesitate to alter the Trinitarian petitions in the liturgy, and was accustomed to do this to such an extent,

expresses himself thus: "I have for seven years past, in my lectures (though, at the same time, always declaring to my pupils that my opinion was contrary to the received notions), maintained steadily the proper unity of God, and that he alone should be the object of religious worship. I thought it my duty to urge all who attended me to inquire, but by no means to make up their judgment till they had read all the Scriptures with critical attention. I wished them to suspend their judgment, till they had

that Mr. Lindsey informs us that he was himself able to attend public worship in his church with entire satisfaction. Of course he was ready and prepared to withdraw, if his superiors had expressed any objection to the liberty he assumed. It is not easy to say to what extent this course (the same which Dr. Priestley tells us he at first recommended to Mr. Lindsey) can be admitted as justifying Dr. Chambers' continuance in the church; but it is evident that his situation must have been very peculiar indeed to have rendered it practicable.

"He was himself," Mr. L. continues, "deeply impressed with a sense of the truth and importance of the doctrine of the *Divine Unity*, and was zealous to diffuse and impart his light and knowledge to others, and often successful in it. He had besides a thirst after all useful knowledge, and spared no pains or cost to attain it; yet still most concerned about what related to God, how best to serve and make him known, and to benefit mankind in their future everlasting concerns, which he was most studious to promote. And he had a mind always open to conviction; well knowing, that we begin our rational life, full of many right, and oftentimes many dubious and false opinions, which we unavoidably take up on the authority of others, the only way in which we can at first learn any thing, and which it becomes us to try and examine into afterwards.

"Above all sordid love of gain, he knew no other use of his fortune, after the necessary supplies of his family, than to make others happy. And he was remarkable for a constant cheerfulness, which was in him the result of a natural gaiety of spirit, never broken or diminished by vice, or too eager worldly pursuits."

heard the evidence on both sides of the question. At the same time, openly professing to them, that my own opinion was settled on this subject. After these explicit declarations, to officiate in a liturgy which is formed on the Athanasian system, struck me as a singular impropriety of conduct, and as an inconsistency of behaviour not to be defended. The sense of this greatly affected me; insomuch, that for two years past I have declined all discharge of duty. But then, to turn my livings into a lay estate, appeared highly dishonourable; you may guess my feelings; my health was sensibly affected: at last, it became a point of necessity for me to resign. You therefore may be satisfied, that I claim no merit from this sacrifice. I only sought relief from my anxiety, and, I thank God, I have found it; this step having perfectly restored my wonted tranquillity of mind."

Shortly after his retirement, Mr. Jebb laid before the public, the views which had influenced him in taking this decisive step, in a pamphlet entitled, "A Short Statement of the Reasons for a late Resignation;" to which is added his letter on the occasion, addressed to his diocesan, the Bishop of Norwich. In this he expresses at length his opinions on the subject of the Trinity, and his full conviction that the God and Father of Jesus Christ is the only proper object of Christian worship; and adds some judicious remarks concerning the true spirit of consistent Protestantism, and the study of the Scriptures as the only authoritative record of revealed truth. He concludes with the following

just and striking remarks on the contrast between the prevailing mode of studying theology, and the more rational system pursued in the philosophy of nature, with the equally remarkable contrast between their results.

“At a period when each less valuable mode of science is rapidly progressive, the state of scriptural knowledge appears to be very imperfect, although we are possessed of every essential requisite to its improvement. That we are at this hour, in a great measure, involved in the gloom of monkish ignorance, is highly probable, from the endless disputations among Christians upon points deemed fundamental, and from the manner in which we generally conduct ourselves in the investigation of religious truth.

“The inquirer into the credenda contained in the gospel, resembles the inquirer into the fundamental laws of nature, before a better philosophy had taught us the vanity of system, and inclined us to adopt the humbler process of experiment. We begin our researches in theology with the assumption of a certain set of religious tenets, and frequently employ the most valuable of those hours which we destine to sacred study in collecting arguments in their favour, and in vain endeavours to explain them; while every text of Scripture is in its turn perverted from its obvious meaning, in order to support them. How much more reasonable, previously to investigate with patience and critical attention, the sense of each particular text or passage, in the natural order of the writer, and to defer the formation of opinion until, like a principle of sound philosophy suggested

by a numerous train of experiments, it forces itself with accumulated evidence on the yielding mind.

“It is solely owing to the preposterous method of inquiry above described, that the holy records of our faith have very injuriously been supposed to be so loosely worded, as in fact to countenance opposite opinions, and to justify the most fantastic doctrines. But let us for a moment reflect, and let the reflection teach us wisdom, that the same phenomena of nature which were brought in evidence of the figments of remote antiquity, were also applied to support the equally vain hypothesis of more modern times. The laws of the material world, in consequence of the introduction of a better method of investigation, are however now demonstrated to be consistent, simple, and invariable; affording a just and easy explication of every natural appearance. If a similar process be observed, similar success may reasonably be expected to be our reward, when we explore the sacred sources of religious truth.” *Works*, vol. ii. 216.

With respect to his future destination, Mr. Jebb's first idea seems to have been to continue his residence at Cambridge, for the purpose of lecturing as before on the Greek Testament, to such young men as might choose to resort to him. It soon appeared, however, that this plan would be rendered impracticable by the determined opposition of the authorities of the place; who, if they had discouraged his undertaking before, and in many instances even prohibited the students under their controul from attend-

ing his lectures, while he was a beneficed clergyman of the church, might be expected to be still more decidedly hostile, now that by quitting his preferments, on the avowed ground of Unitarian sentiments, he had as it were thrown aside the mask, and openly assumed, in their estimation, a sectarian character. He therefore, by the advice of his relation, Sir Richard Jebb (then an eminent physician in London), decided on devoting himself to the medical profession. With this view, he immediately commenced an attendance on the lectures of Dr. Colignon, the Anatomical Professor at Cambridge, while he himself continued to give lectures on mathematics and natural philosophy. In other respects he continued his wonted attention to the interests of the University; having, even at this late period, made one more attempt to accomplish his favourite plan of public examinations.

In September 1776, he finally quitted Cambridge, and established himself in London, where he was occupied almost entirely in the studies and preparations necessary for his intended new mode of life. It must not be supposed, however, that either now or afterwards, in the midst of the varied engagements of professional or political life, he forgot the favourite pursuits and studies of his earlier years. On the contrary, the very circumstances which had led to his ceasing to be a clergyman, only impressed more deeply on his mind the sacred and paramount obligations of religion, and increased his attachment to that holy cause, for the sake of which he had made so great worldly sacrifices. A fever, which he caught in attendance

at the hospital, afforded an opportunity, while laid aside from more active pursuits, of looking more accurately into his own state, which Mr. Jebb was not a man to neglect. His biographer, Dr. Disney, has given the following extract from a sort of private diary, or book of reflections and meditations, which appears to have been drawn up at this period, and accurately represents his habitual character and course of life.

“1. Employ the whole of every Sunday in sacred study, in reading Hartley, Taylor, and other books in which the spirit of piety and morality prevails.

“2. Pay particular attention to every declaration that bears the slightest appearance of a promise. And let me sacredly attend to every engagement, even of the most trivial kind.

“3. Let me be sedulously attentive, on proper occasions, to every person who has shewn me kindness. And omit not the performance of the most trifling circumstance that may give a benefactor pleasure.

“4. Let me read Hartley on ambition ; and the proper and primary pursuits of man be diligently studied.

“5. Remember, if it please God that I obtain a competency by my profession, my great work and duty is, to study critically the Scriptures.

“6. Let me never be induced, by the well-meaning expressions of goodwill from my friends, to think of myself more highly than as a creature who has been exceedingly weak ; and as one, to whom God has shewn uncommon instances of

mercy. Let not the voice of humility be on my tongue, but the real essence of it in my heart. Read Hartley, and attend to Hoadly's and other forms of prayer, as necessity or opportunity shall suggest.

"7. Strive to acquire Christian stoicism; to this purpose read with the Scriptures the works of Antoninus and Epictetus.

"8. Speak the truth. Lie not through fear of man's resentment; nor seek the favour of any by disguising or softening my sentiments."*

The frequent reference to Hartley in the preceding extract, may even now perhaps surprise some readers who have associated the name of this excellent person with little else or better than an ingenious, but fanciful and now exploded theory of vibrations. And we should be glad if the mention of his work in such terms and in such a connexion by a person of our author's eminence and reputation, should excite the curiosity of any reader of this class to inquire further into the real nature of Hartley's claim to the admiration and gratitude of posterity, and to the careful study of those who think religious philosophy on Christian principles, with a view to its practical application, a subject deserving some portion of their regard.

It is evident that in every period of his life, Mr. Jebb was eminently remarkable for mental energy, and a power of intense application, and that his attention had been by no means confined to the mere routine of academical study, or to

* Memoirs, p. 124.

what might be considered as belonging to the clerical profession. It is probable, therefore, that he may not have been altogether unprepared for the new course of study in which it was necessary for him now to engage, previous to entering, at forty-two, on hitherto unwonted employments; but still it is extraordinary that in little more than a year from the time when he decided on devoting himself to medicine, he was qualified to enter on the practice of his profession in the metropolis. "On the 18th of March, 1777, he received his diploma of M.D., from the University of St. Andrew's, in Scotland; his medical recommendation having been signed by four gentlemen of the faculty, of the first distinction and eminence in London. And he was admitted licentiate by the College of Physicians, on the 25th of June following."* Though, however, he was thus empowered to take his rank as a medical practitioner, he was too conscientious not to avail himself of every means of qualifying himself in the completest manner possible for the duties of this arduous and peculiarly responsible profession. Accordingly, he continued his attendance on the most eminent medical teachers in London, and also at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, through this year, and did not commence his own medical practice till February, 1778.

Dr. Jebb was now fully entered on the great arena of the metropolis; and when we consider his own very eminent talents and high reputation, and the distinguished place he had so long

* Memoir, p. 128.

filled in the University of Cambridge, where his zealous and powerful exertions to accomplish important changes in the system of instruction and discipline, though not crowned with success, could not fail to draw upon him the favourable attention of many men of first-rate eminence, it will not be thought wonderful that he found many warm and active friends, and was soon enabled to take a station little (if at all) inferior in weight and influence to that which he had quitted. The very peculiarity of his situation, in quitting for conscience sake a profession in which he might have aspired to a high rank, and embarking on a new course in the midst of his days, would give him a certain interest even with some who were far from agreeing in the opinions which led him to make this sacrifice. His practice rapidly increased, during the whole of the period that his own health permitted him to attend to it; and if his life had been spared a few years longer, there can be little doubt that he would have risen to a distinguished rank in the medical profession.

He was however doomed in more instances than one to experience less pleasing effects of the notoriety which he had acquired elsewhere, and which had made him an object of jealousy to all those who were interested in existing abuses, or who, for whatever reason, were bent on resisting the progress of change in established institutions. In the estimation of all such persons, Dr. Jebb was as it were a "marked man;" and whenever he aspired to a public station of credit or distinction, they

eagerly flocked together to oppose his pretensions. The character he had already acquired followed him to his disadvantage as well as to his benefit into his new field of exertion ; and the same reasons which had before made him unfit to be an Arabic Professor, or a Lecturer on the New Testament, now rendered him equally ineligible as Physician to a London Hospital. Hence it soon appeared, that the same illiberal spirit which had thwarted him on former occasions, was sufficiently powerful to exclude him from those honours and distinctions to which his acknowledged talents and rapidly increasing reputation as a medical practitioner seemed to entitle him.

Nor was he long a resident in London, before he saved his opponents the trouble of recurring to his Cambridge life for this purpose. It is scarcely necessary to say that a man of Dr. Jebb's ardent temper, and warm zeal for every thing which appeared to him to affect the welfare of his fellow-creatures, took a lively interest in the course of public affairs during this eventful period. His intimate connexion with some of the most active and able political characters of his time, and his attachment to the sacred cause of civil and religious liberty, led him to form and express a very decided opinion on the great political questions of the day. He does not seem in *this* instance to have been at all disposed to follow Dr. Hartley's rule, that in public contentions, "it appears to be the duty of a good Christian to sit still, and suffer the children of this world to dispute and fight about it ;" and in the midst of his multi-

plied professional engagements, he found time to come forward and enter very actively into public discussions on important political occasions. The cause of Parliamentary Reform in particular found in him a most active and zealous promoter; and in the agitation of this question, which for several of the latter years of his life occupied a large share of the public attention, his name stands honourably beside those of Wyvill, Cartwright, and many others of the most distinguished political worthies of that day. As an elector of Westminster, he was at first a warm partizan of Mr. Fox, and exerted himself with great vigour and activity in procuring his return at the general election of 1780. He always professed himself a great admirer of the talents and character of this distinguished statesman; until he found himself compelled to separate from him by his utter disapproval of the unfortunate coalition with Lord North. Whatever opinion may now be formed of this measure, as a question of moral or political principle, it is but too manifest that its consequences at the time, and for many years afterwards, were most disastrous, and fatal to the influence of the liberal party in this country; not only from the almost irreparable breach which it occasioned between the leading sections of that party, but from its extreme unpopularity with the public at large, and the general loss of confidence in the principles and consistency of public men. Against this coalition, as soon as it was known to be in contemplation, Dr. Jebb protested both in public and in private, in the warmest and most energetic

terms ; and when it had taken place, though he continued his admiration for the splendid talents of Mr. Fox, it put an end to all further political connexion between them.

The American war Dr. Jebb had reprobated from the first, as not less impolitic than unjust and oppressive ; and in its conclusion he heartily rejoiced, as an important step in the advancement of general liberty ; notwithstanding that its immediate result, in the separation of a great continent from the British empire, was apparently adverse to our national interests. In a letter to a friend at Paris, in September, 1783, he writes : “ I rejoice that you saw that truly great man, Dr. Franklin. I beg you will make my acknowledgments to him for his kind inquiries after my health, and assure him that for the sake of America, for the sake of England, and for the sake of the species, I do most heartily rejoice and cordially congratulate him on the final close of the American war. A contest, which for seven years agitated my mind with feelings not to be described ; but in the whole course of which, I had but one wish, viz. : that victory and honour might rest on that cause, which was in an especial manner the cause of justice and freedom. Thank heaven ! it has prospered beyond my expectations. I hope the fair example will do service to remotest ages ; and the acts of freemen on the other side of the Atlantic, inspire our countrymen on this with a similar spirit, in case they should be injured in the same manner.” *

* Memoir, p. 188.

In the midst of his active political exertions, Dr. Jebb did not relax in his attention to the studies and duties of his profession. In the autumn of 1782, he published, "Select Cases of the Disorder commonly called the Paralysis of the Lower Extremities; to which is added, a case of Catalepsy." He also continued to take the same lively interest as formerly in scriptural and theological inquiries, though his various engagements in other directions prevented him from devoting much time to these pursuits; a circumstance much to be regretted, because his learning, acuteness, and natural disposition peculiarly fitted him for researches of this kind, which, whatever may be thought of the contests and discussions which occupied so large a portion of the latter years of his life, we cannot but regard as of more permanent interest and value.

The only pieces of a theological character which appeared from Dr. Jebb's pen after his settlement in London, were a short postscript to his friend Mr. Lindsey's "Two Dissertations," in answer to a writer* who had charged him with appealing to the "authority of Mr. Lindsey against praying to Christ;" and a "Preliminary Address on the Formation of the Society for Promoting the Knowledge of the Scriptures." In the former, at the same time that he speaks in high terms of the ability which

* This anonymous writer now appears to have been the Rev. Dr. Findlay, afterwards the worthy, respected, and liberal, though orthodox, Professor of Divinity at Glasgow, who acknowledged the pamphlet in a letter inserted in the recently-published Memoirs of Dr. Carpenter, p. 184.

Mr. Lindsey had shewn in his arguments on the point in question, and his full concurrence in his conclusions, he disclaims any idea of relying on his or any other human authority on such a subject. He had not in fact entered into the argument at all; his object having been, in his "Statement of Reasons, &c.," to explain as concisely as possible the leading points on which he differed from the established doctrines, in consequence of which it was impossible for him to retain office or emolument in the church. He then explains in a few words his idea of the duty of deducing all our views of revealed truth solely from the word of God. "Not," he adds, "that I would presume myself, or advise others, to reject the lights which the labours of learned men, engaged in the same pursuit, from time to time have held forth to us; on the contrary, I think it necessary to avail ourselves of every assistance we can procure; but, at the same time, I would always press the use of private judgment; by which I would be understood to mean, the exercise of a judgment entirely unbiassed, and free from every kind of prejudice, such as becomes every man, in a case, which to every man is of private concern. This freedom of the mind, from the exercise of which the most glorious consequences would be derived to society, I hold to be essential in constituting the character of a true protestant. The invasion of it by any human authority, how respectable soever, I esteem as an outrage against the majesty of heaven; as it tends to deprive the Almighty of the proper homage of his crea-

tures. I have contended, and to the latest hour of my life will contend, for its establishment, in its most unlimited extent; and I protest against the ungenerous policy, which at the present moment, under pretence of zeal for the interests of Christianity, really aims at establishing the empire of the magistrate over conscience, and thereby subjecting the noblest faculties and endowments of our nature to the lust of lawless power, the most baneful passion of our frame.”*

In the “Sketch of the Plan of the Society for Promoting a Knowledge of the Scriptures,” the author enters more largely into the development of the same idea which is pointed out in the preceding extract. He states it as the object of the intended society to promote such investigations of the sense of Scripture, as should be conducted altogether without reference to any preconceived theological views, as though it were a document now for the first time placed in our hands, and it were our business to inquire into its purport on the same principles, and according to the same rules of criticism and interpretation as we should use in studying an ancient classic, or any other human composition.

The general argument in favour of the proposed plan of scriptural investigation cannot, we think, be contested. And the more nearly any person suitably qualified by learning and other requisite mental attainments can bring his

* Lindsey's Two Dissertations, &c. Postscript, by Dr. Jebb, p. 148.

mind into the state here described, provided that he can successfully combine with this "liberty of indifference" a due reverence for the authority of sacred writ, and an habitual feeling of the practical importance of the conclusions to be derived from his critical studies, the more likely he will be to arrive at the true sense of Scripture. But here lies the difficulty. It cannot be in practice, nor ought we to desire, that any person should address himself to this most important business, without having his mind already familiar with the doctrines of religion, and deeply imbued with practical principles and devotional habits intimately connected with the doctrinal views he has imbibed. We cannot therefore expect, as our author proposes, that any theological scholar should set himself to study an epistle of Paul on the same plan, or in the same calm and cold spirit of impartiality with which he might criticise an epistle of Horace.

Though, however, it is in the nature of things impossible that he should be free from bias, let him maintain by all possible means a spirit of candour and openness to conviction, and guard against the assumption, that the views of controverted questions which he happens to have associated with his religious impressions and feelings are therefore so certainly true, that all arguments and criticisms must be received with suspicion which cannot be made to minister to their support.

This society consisted of about thirty or forty members, among whom were Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, Mr. Tyrwhitt of Cambridge,

Dr. Priestley, Dr. Price, Mr. Lindsey, Dr. Jebb, Dr. Kippis, Mr. Dodson, and other eminent Scripture critics. They published from time to time a series of valuable papers from various contributors, which are collected into two volumes, known under the title of "Commentaries and Essays." Many of these are extremely interesting and instructive to the biblical student; but it is not necessary to read them with the eye of an opponent in order to perceive that the writers have rarely attained, perhaps they have not often attempted, that perfect freedom from all doctrinal prepossession which should enable them to pursue in all its extent the "analytical" method proposed by Dr. Jebb. There are perhaps none of these papers to which this remark is more applicable than the two excellent dissertations of Mr. Tyrwhitt, on the "Creation of all things by Christ, and on the Resurrection of the Dead through the man Jesus Christ;" in which the author certainly did not set himself to examine, as it were *de novo*, the meaning of the passages referred to, but to shew how they supported, or were at least consistent with, the humanity of Christ, assumed to be the prevailing doctrine of Scripture.

These two papers are perhaps for this very reason less affected than the rest by another practical difficulty in carrying into effect the plan of this society; namely, that the essays, though of great intrinsic value, were for the most part far from being popular. Not only did they stimulate no passions or party feelings, but there was little or nothing to excite

or warm the affections ; little that was capable of any immediate practical application. The inquiries are commonly pursued in a dry and technical style, which can hardly be expected to be interesting except to those who engage in them with somewhat of a professional view. Hence their circulation was very limited, and was far from defraying the expense of publication. In its original form, the society did not long subsist ; but it possesses a considerable historical interest with Unitarians, as having led the way to the establishment, a few years afterwards, of the Unitarian Book Society ; the first in order of time of those associations which have ever since existed among us, and have had a considerable influence in promoting what we regard as the truth as it is in Jesus.

The last public effort of Dr. Jebb was the preparation of a short tract, entitled "Thoughts on Prisons," containing some useful hints on their construction and internal arrangement, suggested by his medical experience, and dictated by more sound and truly Christian views of our duty to the unhappy inmates of these erections than were generally prevalent at that time. There is good reason to believe that in this respect the tone of public feeling is of late years considerably changed for the better ; and by the publication of these thoughts, our author may have been a fellow-worker with others whose labours have been more conspicuous and extensive in promoting this change. It was one of his maxims, that no effort, for any great and good object, is lost.

Dr. Jebb's incessant occupations, and the

arduous labours he had to undergo in preparing himself in so short a time for the duties of a new profession, taken up late in life, made very serious inroads on his health, which probably had never been very robust. In the course of his practice, he more than once suffered severely from disorders contracted in attendance upon patients. Other serious complaints reduced him gradually to a state of extreme debility, which, in the beginning of 1786, was evidently bringing him near to the close of a mortal existence, too short for the wishes and prayers of his friends; but filled from first to last with active exertion dictated by high principle, by an earnest desire to do good, and to approve himself in this, as in all other respects, a faithful and consistent disciple of Jesus Christ. He died March 2, 1786, in the fifty-first year of his age.

Dr. Jebb's writings were collected and published by subscription, in three volumes 8vo., in 1787. An interesting Memoir is prefixed, from the pen of his friend and follower in the same honourable course, Dr. Disney.* From

* The following high and well-merited eulogium on Dr. Jebb, by his friend Mr. Maty, was inserted in a review of the "*Thoughts on Prisons*:"—"This is the last work of the much valued and much lamented *John Jebb*. He was correcting the last sheets of it the last time I saw him: and with it he closed a life of the most vigorous and unremitting pursuit of whatever he conceived to be useful to his fellow-creatures, for whom he seemed to live. Neither a variety of occupations of another kind, nor the difference of opinion I could not help entertaining upon several important subjects, would have prevented me from adding my slender tribute of affectionate regard to my friend's memory, as I had promised to do, had not Dr. Disney

this Memoir the information contained in the preceding article has been chiefly derived.

taken up the work. To him, who has collected ample materials, &c., I gladly commit it, as there can be no doubt of his answering the wishes of that very respectable list of subscribers, who have already appeared, to do honour to the memory of the most perfect human being I, and I believe those who approached him as nigh as I did, have ever seen."

In connexion with the account of Dr. Jebb's Cambridge life, it may not be amiss to add, that he enjoyed during this period the intimacy and cordial co-operation of Paley, then at the height of his reputation, as a most able and successful tutor at Christ's College. This very eminent person, though he did not give his name to the clergy's petition, was decidedly favorable to its object; and took a part in the active controversy to which it gave rise. On the important questions at that time agitated in the University, he entirely agreed with Mr. Jebb; and perhaps his biographer, Mr. Meadley, may be right in ascribing the different lines of conduct which each of them might at times pursue, rather to a difference of temperament than of principle,—to the motives which respectively actuate a sanguine and a cautious mind.

On other still more important questions, his timidity of conduct and laxity of principle present a mortifying contrast to the unbending integrity and boldness of his friend. To what extent his theological opinions "fell below the established standard of orthodoxy," it may not be easy to ascertain. An able writer in the "Monthly Repository" (N. S. ii. 854), has endeavoured to shew that it was very considerable; and perhaps he has proved his point. But it may be doubted whether the conclusion is one in which even a Unitarian can rest with unmixed satisfaction; at least it must be admitted that we can only prove Paley's anti-trinitarianism at the expence of his sincerity and consistency. If he ever used the very inconsiderate and reprehensible expression often ascribed to him, that "he could not afford to keep a conscience," it is impossible to suppose that he meant it seriously; but the wit, such as it is, of the saying, is a poor compensation for the damage it has occasioned to the character of one who *ought* to have been an effective champion of honesty and candour, of simplicity and godly sincerity.

EDWARD EVANSON

Was born at Warrington, in Lancashire, April 21, 1731. When he was about three years old his father removed to Macclesfield, where he established a commercial school, which he conducted for many years with great success and reputation. At seven years of age, Edward, who was the eldest of a numerous family, was taken under the more immediate care and protection of his uncle, the Rev. John Evanson, then, and for forty years afterwards, vicar of Mitcham, in Surry, where he had also established a flourishing classical school. From this gentleman he received the whole of his school education; and made such progress in his studies as induced his uncle to educate him for the church; with which view he was sent to Emanuel College, Cambridge, at the early age of fourteen. Here he continued to distinguish himself by his diligence and proficiency, and took an honourable degree in January, 1749. He was then strongly urged to remain at College for the further prosecution of his studies; but, in accordance with his uncle's wishes, he returned to Mitcham, where he became his assistant in the instruction of his pupils. In connection however with this employment, he was duly attentive to his own improvement; and at the usual period returned

to Cambridge, where he took his second degree of M.A. In 1752 he was ordained, and became his uncle's curate, continuing at the same time his assistance in the school, which in the year 1760, his uncle entirely resigned to him. His reputation as a teacher at this period was considerable; and he was so acceptable both in the pulpit and in general society, as to procure many friends of distinction and influence; among the rest, Mr. Wedderburne, afterwards Earl of Rosslyn and Lord Chancellor, who then resided at Mitcham, and Mr. Dodd, Member for Reading. In 1768 he obtained the vicarage of South Mims, near Barnet, where he resided till December, 1769, when he was presented, through the influence of Mr. Dodd with Lord Camden, then Chancellor, to the vicarage of Tewkesbury. In conjunction with this, he held the living of Longdon, a village in Worcestershire, about five miles from Tewkesbury, for which he exchanged South Mims.

"Until this period," says Mr. Evanson, "never having had ecclesiastical preferment sufficient to afford me a decent competence, I had not the leisure necessary for the studious investigation of the rise and origin of the most important theological doctrines; but I now set myself to a diligent study of the Scriptures of both Testaments, and also whatever remains of the writers of the two first centuries after the apostolic age, in order to qualify myself more thoroughly for a faithful and useful discharge of my duties as a ministering servant of Jesus Christ. But I soon found that the system of religion called orthodox, and established by

Constantine in the fourth century, owed its origin solely to the paganism of the converts of the second and third centuries, and was so far from being taught by the apostles as the religion of the Christian covenant, that it was the very apostasy from it, which they predicted would very early take place, and at length be signally and utterly destroyed at the glorious coming of the Christ, to assume his promised kingdom of this world, for the coming of which he taught his disciples constantly to pray. Under this conviction, I should immediately have quitted the church, as I did afterwards, if the circumstances of the times, and the apparent disposition of the people to attend to rational arguments on the subject, had not induced the sanguine hopes of my inexperienced mind into a persuasion, that it was probable that the petition of a large body of the clergy for a reform of the liturgy, then designed to have been presented to the legislature, together with such irresistible arguments as I then fondly thought I could urge to the public, might produce a considerable reform both of the creeds and the book of Common Prayer. With this view, in the year 1772, I published the "Examination of the Doctrines of a Trinity, &c.," addressed to the king, as head of the legislature and of the church, having previously determined to separate from the church if no such reform was made. This determination I avowed in a private letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in October of the same year; stating the rise of my first scruples, with the grounds of them, and requesting his grace to favour me,

by means of his secretary, with any satisfactory information in his power that might assist me in removing those doubts, and enable me to remain conscientiously in my office as a minister of the gospel, to which I was attached, not only by inclination, but by many other motives, and particularly the well-founded expectations of powerful interest for my promotion in the church: but to this letter I never received any answer.”*

Having thus been led to deviate so widely from the standards of doctrine prescribed in the church of which he was a member, it will naturally be supposed that the change would soon become manifest in his pulpit services, and that he would occasionally let fall sentiments which could not be reconciled with the views generally maintained by those called orthodox Christians. The open frankness of character for which Mr. Evanson was remarkable, would render this almost unavoidable, even if it had not been the natural course dictated to him, by his anxiety to instruct his people in what he conceived to be the truth as it is in Jesus, and to follow out for their benefit and improvement the opinions he had adopted to what appeared to him their legitimate practical consequences. But he went further than this; for he did not hesitate to alter various expressions in the liturgy, which he now perceived to be inconsistent with scripture truth, and which therefore he could not conscientiously use. It is not easy to see how he could introduce alter-

* See Monthly Repository, i. 2.

ations of this kind to such an extent as to meet the exigency of the case, without creating extreme confusion; and that he was able, or was permitted by his congregation to do it at all, shews that by his talents as a preacher, by his reputation as a scholar and a divine, and by the general respectability of his character, he must have obtained in a surprisingly short space of time, a more than ordinary influence with his parishioners. There is accordingly reason to believe that this was the case with a large majority of his people, both at Tewkesbury and at Longdon.

At length, however, a sufficient spirit of discontent was generated, to induce a small party to institute proceedings against him in the Ecclesiastical Court. The following were the circumstances of the case. Intending to prepare a sermon for Easter-day 1771, he chose the doctrine of the resurrection, and fixed on the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians for his text. He sat down, as was his custom, to study the chapter with particular attention, and though in the burial service he had read it some hundred times,—“and perhaps,” says he, “my having it early by rote was the cause of my inattention,” he was exceedingly struck with observing, that instead of teaching that mankind are to rise to a future life with the same bodies with which they die, the sole and obvious scope of St. Paul's argument is, to assure us that we shall rise with very different bodies; “and from that time, and never before,” he continues, “I exchanged the word ‘body’ for ‘dead,’ in the

Apostles' Creed, because I could not understand the words 'resurrection of the body' to mean any thing but the same body; and after this I must have asserted a falsehood if I had said I believed any such thing.'*"

From this time, the malicious spirit of this intolerant party began to work, until November 1773, when a prosecution was commenced in the Consistory Court of the diocese. The particular criminal facts charged against Mr. Evan-son were, that in two private conversations,—in his sermon, preached on Easter-day 1771,—in his pamphlet on the Doctrines of a Trinity, &c.,—and also in an answer to a menacing letter sent him by the prosecutor, he had offended against the fourth, fifth, and sixth canons, and against the statute of the 18th of Elizabeth, and by two alterations and two omissions in the public service, against the 14th and 38th canons.

The pamphlet here referred to is in every view a very remarkable performance. It certainly would not give the reader the impression, that the subject to which it relates had but recently, and for a short time engaged the writer's attention. He has formed a very decided opinion, that many of the articles to which he had so lately signified his full assent and consent are false, absurd, and blasphemous; and he does not hesitate to express this opinion in no very measured terms. In the prefatory letter to the King, he declares very decidedly against all creeds and confessions

* Sermon really preached at Tewkesbury, Easter-day 1771. Dedication, p. ix.

established by human authority; and all connexion between church and state. "The only influence which the laws of Christ's gospel can in their natural effect have on the kingdoms of this world, is to assist the power of the civil magistrate, by strengthening and confirming the several bands of social compact, inducing every rank and order of men faithfully to discharge the duties of their several stations, more for conscience sake than for fear of human resentment, and enforcing a strict and uniform obedience to every just law, even in those instances which escape the cognizance of worldly courts of justice."*

He then examines very unreservedly the doctrines of a Trinity and Incarnation, as laid down in the first five of the thirty-nine articles, which he denounces in the strongest terms, shewing the impossibility of any intermediate refuge between the opposing extremes of Tritheism on the one hand, and Sabellianism on the other, and exposing the absurdity of attempting or professing to believe without ideas, with great eloquence and strength of argument. "Such a doctrine," says he, "is not in any degree a proper object of our faith; and after all that has been said and written in defence of it, I find myself forced to conclude, that no man ever did cordially and *ex animo* believe it; and I must regard that conclusion as the result of actual demonstration until I shall see it satisfactorily proved, either that belief is not an act of the mind, but merely of the lips, or that the

* p. 37.

mind can comprehend what is incomprehensible, or, which appears to be exactly the same thing, that it can believe without understanding what it is it does believe.”*

He afterwards gives a plain and unvarnished account of the history of the three contradictory creeds prescribed by the Church of England. “Such creeds,” he continues, “or any creeds enforced by human authority on the members of Christ’s church, are the plain marks of heresy and antichrist; for every society that assumes any badge of party, by enjoining on its members unscriptural tests of distinction between them and other disciples of Jesus Christ, is a heresy. For this reason, whenever I shall see an established church, in any country, open wide its bosom to receive all such Christians as profess merely those words of faith, which the Holy Scriptures expressly tell us were preached by our Lord himself and his apostles; and shall find its liturgy and public offices modelled entirely on the plan prescribed to us in the plain and uncontroverted passages of the Gospel, I shall acknowledge that to be the real church of Christ. But as circumstances are at present, I do not scruple to assert that the Greek church, the church of Rome, the church of England, the church of Scotland, the church of Luther, the church of Calvin, together with all their numerous subdivisions, are *heresies*: those very schisms in the body of Christ, of which the world was so repeatedly, but as it has proved in vain, forewarned by the great apostle to the Gentiles.”†

* p. 80. † p. 156.

On the whole, this treatise displays great learning, and no ordinary power of eloquence and reasoning. But it has little of that healing and conciliatory character about it, which might encourage a prospect of uniting estranged and opposite parties ; and it is difficult to conceive that the author, by enlarging in such a strain on the abuses and corruptions of the church to which he belonged, could suppose that he was contributing in any degree towards the accomplishment of that reform *from within*, which he professed to have at heart. Certainly there is nothing in any writings of Priestley or of Belsham, so likely to prove offensive and revolting, both to those who bear rule in this politico-ecclesiastical establishment, and to those who had hitherto received implicitly the obnoxious doctrines, with all the reverence due to dictates of the Divine word. How it happened that the bulk of the parishioners of Longdon and Tewkesbury at this period were prepared to support a man who shewed himself disposed to carry matters to this extremity in opposition to the established authorities, it is not easy to imagine. Such however appears to have been the case. When they learned that a prosecution was commenced against Mr. Evan-son, a numerous meeting was instantly held of the inhabitants of the town, and resolutions passed declaring their unanimous abhorrence of the proceeding, and their determination to support him in his defence. That he had in fact exposed himself to this prosecution, and become liable to ecclesiastical censure by the alterations he had made in the public service,

by repeatedly preaching and speaking in derogation of the doctrines and constitution of the church, to say nothing of the powerful and vehement attack upon it in his pamphlet, cannot admit of a moment's doubt. Many clergymen have been deprived for much less offensive proceedings; and if the prosecutors had exercised in aid of their intolerant bigotry that degree of attention to the ordinary forms of procedure which might have been expected from their professional character, (for the most active among them were legal men,) Mr. Evanson must have met with the same fate. But after keeping the prosecution alive by a tedious and vexatious process for four years, and incurring a very heavy expense, all of which they trusted to saddle on the defendant, the whole was quashed, in consequence of some technical irregularity, and so ended in what is called at common law a non-suit. Through the whole of this business Mr. Evanson enjoyed the gratuitous legal assistance of his friend Mr. Wedderburne, then Solicitor-General.*

After the application of the petitioning clergy was defeated, and all intention of renewing it appeared to be abandoned, Mr. Evanson made up his mind that he could no longer consistently remain a minister of a church whose doctrines and services he believed to be antichristian;

* It is remarkable, that Mr. Wedderburne, who must of course have read the "Letter to the King," and consequently was fully aware of the extent of Mr. Evanson's deviation from the standards of the church, not only had no idea of his quitting his living on that account, but was desirous to exert his own already powerful influence to procure him further preferment.

and he was only prevented for some time from acting on this conviction, by the tedious delay of the prosecution, which he seems to have thought himself bound in honour to resist to the last. How far this was a wise determination on his part may perhaps be questioned. He must have been fully sensible that he had in fact incurred the penalty of the law, and that if he escaped its sentence, it could be only through the mismanagement of his adversaries, which afforded his legal advisers the means of evading it. And if it had ended, as was most probable, in his being formally deprived, he would surely have felt very painfully how much more graceful and honourable his position would have been after a voluntary retirement. When the prosecution was at length defeated, though merely on a point of form, the decision was hailed at Tewkesbury with great and almost universal joy ; insomuch that they would fain have rung the church-bells for three days successively ; and were only prevented by the interference of Mr. Evanson, who disliked this ostentatious triumph, and finding persuasions ineffectual, at length through the medium of a friend actually bribed the ringers to desist on the second day.

In 1773, Mr. Evanson published three discourses, on "The Man after God's own heart," "On the Faith of Abraham," and "On the Seal of the Foundation of God." The title-page is inscribed with the text, "Refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself unto godliness," which well expresses the general tendency of the whole publication ; namely, to

expose the folly and profaneness of the articles and creeds of human devising, which have been imposed on the Christian church as confessions of faith, and their utter vanity without those good works which are the only sufficient indication or fruit of that faith or confidence which is acceptable in the sight of God. These discourses are expressed in the manly independent tone of one who felt that though still nominally in the church, he was practically free from its shackles.

At Longdon, where Mr. Evanson was much beloved by his parishioners, the announcement of his intention to resign was received with universal regret; and they pressed him to continue among them, assuring him that they should be perfectly satisfied with any alterations he thought it necessary to make in the liturgy. But his mind was now perfectly clear as to the course which a regard to truth and integrity required; and being no longer withheld by other circumstances from acting according to the dictates of his own conscience, he proceeded without further delay to the discharge of what appeared to him an important and indispensable duty.

Previous and preparatory to his final separation from the church, Mr. Evanson published "A Letter to the Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, wherein the Importance of the Prophecies of the New Testament, and the Nature of the Grand Apostasy predicted in them, are particularly and impartially considered." This pamphlet contains the first intimation of the idea which he afterwards more fully developed,

and which forms the basis of his test of canonical Scripture, that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. xix. 10.) Bishop Hurd, in some discourses on the prophecies of the New Testament, had adopted the common protestant hypothesis, which represents antichrist and the man of sin as *exclusively* prefiguring the Pope and church of Rome. Mr. Evanson labours, and with great justice and force of reasoning, to shew that these predictions require a more extended application, and that the marks of antichrist are but too discernible in every professed Christian church; above all in those which have been established under the auspices of the civil power. The unauthorized interference of the arm of flesh to wield the sword of the spirit, was unfortunately manifested by the first Christian emperor, ages before the Romish power was fully established, and under his direction was already productive of a copious harvest of those same evil fruits which have ever since depraved and corrupted the church of God. And those (so called) reformed communities which in later times have separated from the church of Rome, have abandoned it is true some of its superstitions, and displayed less of its persecuting spirit, as they had fewer opportunities and facilities for that purpose; but the root is still there, and brings forth from time to time but too abundant supplies of the same noxious produce. In order to establish these positions, he enters into a lengthened application of those passages from Daniel, from St. Paul, and from the Apocalypse, most commonly believed to predict an extensive falling

away from the simple and pure morality of the primitive church, by which the later ages of its history are so lamentably characterized. Whatever may be thought of the argument, the fact will admit of little question; and the truth of the author's conclusion, that a spirit adverse to that of Christ is extensively discernible, and even predominant, not merely in popery, but in every form of protestantism which has obtained the countenance of the civil power, will be generally acknowledged. Since this fact appears to him to be clearly predicted in the New Testament, he considers the inference as inevitable, either that the Christian revelation is not true, or that the religion of every "orthodox" church in Europe is fabulous and false.

A few months after the publication of this letter, in March, 1778, Mr. Evanson announced his intended resignation to his diocesan, the Bishop of Worcester, in the following terms :

"My Lord,

"If your Lordship hath condescended to peruse a printed letter of mine to the Bishop of Litchfield, a copy of which (as I thought my duty to my diocesan required) I ordered my bookseller to transmit to your Lordship in the month of November last, you are already apprized of the grounds of my dissatisfaction with the established theology and mode of public worship; both which, upon a fair comparison of them with the prophecies of the gospel, appear to me too plainly to be in many respects impious and idolatrous. My objections, perhaps, may be thought unworthy the attention of my superiors in the church; but after the

most mature deliberation, I find no reason to alter my own sentiments concerning them. And as I perceive not the least prospect of any reformation of our establishment in those important points, the only step now left for me to take, as a sincere disciple of Jesus Christ, is to relinquish a ministry whose functions I can no longer reconcile with my Christian duty, and withdraw myself entirely from a society which I apprehend to be, not merely erroneous (for that were human), but grossly and fundamentally erroneous. For this purpose it is necessary that I should in the first place make a formal resignation of this vicarage to your Lordship." &c.

Soon afterwards he published "The Sermon really preached in the Parish Church of Tewkesbury, on Easter-day, 1771; with an Epistle dedicatory to the worthy Inhabitants of Tewkesbury, &c.;" containing remarks on an account of that affair which had been recently published by the promoters of the prosecution against him.

When Mr. Evanson withdrew from the church his private fortune was very slender; and he gave up not merely the preferment actually in his possession, but the fair prospect of future advancement to which, with his connexions and reputation for talents and learning, he might reasonably look forward; not to add, that he quitted a profession in the duties of which he took great delight, and in which he had the satisfaction of thinking that he had done good service. He retired to Mitcham, and there resumed for some years the employment in which so large a por-

tion of his early life had been spent, of a teacher of youth; an employment for which there is good reason to think he was well qualified, not merely by classical attainments above par, but by the habit and facility of communicating knowledge and training the youthful mind; qualifications by no means uniformly connected with accomplished scholarship. Here he was joined by his eldest sister, Mrs. Margaret Evanson, who assumed the charge of his domestic establishment. This lady partook in a considerable degree of the talent and spirit of her brother, as well as of his peculiar opinions, which on one occasion she proved herself competent to defend with no small ability, if not success.* Some time afterwards his uncle died, and left him the greater part of his fortune, by which, in addition to the proceeds of his labour as a teacher, he seems to have been again placed not only above want, but in tolerably easy circumstances.

With Mr. Evanson's abilities and connexions his number of pupils was soon made up. Among them was a grandson of the Earl of Bute, and eldest brother of the present Lord Wharncliffe, who remained under his care from the age of four to that of sixteen. He appears to have been a youth of amiable character and high promise; and at his lamented death, at the early age of twenty-four, he made it his earnest request to his father, Colonel Stuart, that he would make a suitable provision for his excellent tutor, Mr.

* See "A Letter to a Friend, containing some Observations on Mr. Falkner's Critique on the Dissonance." 1811.

Evanson. Of the intercourse which took place in consequence between him and Colonel Stuart, the writer is happy in being permitted to insert the following particulars communicated by his respected friend, Mr. Alexander of Yarmouth, the most intimate surviving friend of Mr. Evanson and his sister, for whose kind assistance in other respects he begs to take this opportunity of expressing his obligations.

* * * * "It was during Mr. Pitt's administration, with which Colonel Stuart must have been closely connected; for, after stating his deceased son's wishes respecting his 'good old tutor,' he said, 'There is a situation under government quite at my disposal, and which is at your service, where you would have nothing to do; the income is £500 a year.' Mr. Evanson expressed his cordial thanks for the Colonel's kind intentions; but he was in very comfortable circumstances; he did not need or wish for any thing more than he had. And besides, he could not under any circumstances accept or receive public money without having first earned it. The Hon. Colonel expressed some surprise, and after a pause said, 'Well, sir, it now occurs to me that it is in my power to put you in a situation where the income will be about the same, and where you would be called upon occasionally to do something: I hope you can accept of that?' Mr. Evanson, after expressing his acknowledgments for the intended kindness, said he must decline accepting that situation also; for entirely disapproving the measures of the administration, he could not accept of any favour from, or act under them. And again

cordially thanking Colonel Stuart, and expressing much satisfaction at being so affectionately remembered at the close of his life by his former amiable pupil, assured him he was very easy in his present circumstances, and wished not for any change. The Colonel expressed great surprise and regret at this second refusal. 'Well, sir,' said he, 'you do surprise me! I will make another proposition, which I hope you will accede to, or I shall be much grieved. Will you accept of one hundred a year annuity for the remainder of your life, out of my private estate?' To this Mr. Evanson replied, that he did not feel an objection; for he perceived that in complying with the dying wishes of the son, he was gratifying the father, and therefore he should thankfully accept his liberal offer. This annuity Mr. Evanson accordingly received for the nine remaining years of his life."

In the year 1786, Mr. Evanson married Dorothy, second daughter of Mr. R. Alchorne of the Old Jewry, London. One branch of his wife's family—which was from Essex—was in the enjoyment of a very lucrative place under government; all were of high church principles, and some ministers of the established church. But Mrs. Evanson and one of her sisters became converts to his belief.*

About this time Mr. Evanson inserted some letters in the *Theological Repository*, conducted by Dr. Priestley, under the signature of Eu-

* Memoir of the Author, prefixed to a second edition of the "*Reflections, &c.*" 1838.

bulus, objecting strongly to a weekly day of rest. This institution, which Christians in general have agreed in regarding as essential to the maintenance of religion in the world, and have very generally derived its sanction from the direct authority of God in the fourth commandment, our author, on the contrary, stigmatizes as an idle and pernicious superstition, altogether discountenanced by the New Testament, and referable to no higher or better origin than the decree of Constantine, at the beginning of the fourth century; among the first fruits of that ill-starred union of church and state, from which have arisen so many other corruptions of the pure doctrine and practice of the primitive church. A position so contrary to the general practice and feelings of almost all parties of Christians naturally raised opponents, and he was answered accordingly in the same publication by Dr. Priestley and by Mr. Bretland of Exeter. But a candid reader of the whole controversy will perhaps be inclined to doubt whether either party was fully aware of the exact bearing, either of his own argument or that of his antagonist. In fact, the advocates of a weekly day of rest, though agreed in considering it as of great practical importance, are by no means agreed as to the grounds on which they are disposed to rest its obligation and authority. They are far from being unanimous, either in the disposition to enforce its observance with a strict and judaical rigour, or in deriving its authority from the Mosaic law. It is difficult indeed to see how we can consistently appeal to this, while we

reject every other part of the ritual law, and, in this particular instance, assume a right to modify the strictness of its observance, and even to change the day originally fixed by express divine command. On what ground, or by virtue of what permission, this discretionary power was exercised, the advocates of the Christian *Sabbath*, as they commonly choose to term it, have failed to explain; and it then becomes necessary to desert the sabbatarian theory, and seek for the authority of a weekly day of rest, either in the New Testament, or in considerations of utility and expediency. But we think that few of the most zealous promoters of the more strict observance of this day, when they have found it necessary to argue the matter with the gainsayer, can fail to have been struck with the total absence in the New Testament of any express direction on this subject, and the extreme scantiness, to say the least of it, of the intimations which it contains of the existence of the practice among the primitive Christians,—a circumstance which we cannot but think ought to check the imperious dogmatism with which they often presume to censure as good Christians as themselves, for the manner in which they exercise their own discretion in the mode of solemnizing the Lord's day.

This and other points are well and ably argued by Mr. Evanson; but it may be doubted whether he in his turn has given due weight to the evidence derived from the writings of the early fathers, of the observance of the first day of the week as a religious festival, long anterior to the time of Constantine, and in fact at

so early a period as to make it scarcely possible to avoid the conclusion that it was derived from the primitive church, and was consequently countenanced by the example, if not enforced by the authority of the apostles. That it was not marked by abstinence, restriction, and gloom, is certain; and in those times, when Christian churches were still merely insulated communities, surrounded on all sides by masses of heathen population, and most probably in many instances containing numerous members dependant for subsistence on heathen employers, they would not find it in their power to suspend their ordinary occupations on that day to such an extent as they might otherwise have wished. That there was no positive restriction from other employments prior to the time of Constantine cannot be wondered at, because it was not till his time that the civil power, by which alone such a restriction could be promulgated or enforced, was available to this purpose. Most of Mr. Evanson's readers will also be of opinion that he has not done full justice to the argument in favour of this practice derived from expediency. He has we think very much underrated the moral and religious benefits to which it may be instrumental, and has proportionally exaggerated the mischiefs arising from its abuse by the uneducated and vicious. It may be added too, that his representation of a weekly day of rest as annihilating at one stroke a seventh part of human industry, is not borne out either by reason or experience. If men were to go on, as he seems to recommend, in their ordinary employments,

from one year's end to another, without cessation or intermission, there is every reason to think that the entire quantity of labour would not be increased, and that the value of its results or produce might be even diminished. It is not denied that many abuses prevail, and that the mode of observing the Lord's-day is capable of much improvement. This will probably arise, in proportion to the increasing spread of education and instruction; and we in this country might in the mean time derive considerable benefit from a candid attention to the manner in which it is solemnized in some other Protestant states, at least not inferior to ourselves in purity of manners, and regard for religious institutions.

Mr. Evanson soon afterwards republished the whole controversy in a separate form, with an additional letter in reply to Dr. Priestley, which had been precluded from insertion in the Theological Repository, by the suspension of that publication. Whatever we may think of the author's opinion on this question, we should be in the wrong to suppose that it implied either indifference to religion in general, or any disposition to undervalue the benefits of social worship and religious instruction. He did not, it may be thought, sufficiently consider by what means these important objects might be most effectually secured to the public at large; but in his individual capacity he was far from being deficient in his attention to them. At Mitcham, and other places where he afterwards resided, he had rarely the opportunity of attending on Unitarian worship, and he could not consci-

entiously join in that of the church; but he was accustomed to have worship in his family on the Sunday, making use of Dr. Clarke's reformed liturgy, with some alterations of his own; and whenever he had any visitors, he administered the Lord's Supper, which he considered as the sole Christian rite, and always to be administered when a number of the professors of the religion of Jesus met for social worship.

In 1789, having purchased about 150 acres of land at Great Blakenham, near Ipswich, in Suffolk, he gave up his plan of tuition, and retired thither to farm his own estate. In this tranquil seclusion he continued for six or seven years.

In 1792, Mr. Evanson published the work in connexion with which his name is now chiefly remembered, and which contains the most elaborate statement of those opinions in which he differed most widely from almost all other theological writers. It is entitled, "The Dissonance of the four generally received Evangelists, and the Evidence of their respective Authenticity examined." Whatever we may think of the opinions maintained in this publication, it is impossible to deny to the work itself the merit of eminent learning, and of acute and ingenious argument, which in some instances it may be thought has not been fully and completely met by any of his opponents. At the same time, we are apt to think the warmest of his admirers will be ready to admit, that if it had contained less of personal sarcasm, of an apparent levity of thought and expression, and of revolting

imputations, conveyed in no measured or unhesitating language, against writers to whose works all other professing Christians but himself, have been accustomed to look up with the respect and reverence due to canonical Scripture, it would not have been less adapted than it is to obtain from its readers a candid and deliberate attention to the author's peculiar views.

When asked, why we believe that the books of the New Testament were written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, we have been accustomed to reply, 'for the same reason that we believe Tacitus and Josephus to have written the works which bear their names;' the only difference being, that in the case of the sacred writings, the argument, though similar in kind, is greatly superior in the strength and fullness of its application. They have been uniformly ascribed to these writers in all subsequent ages; and we can thus trace them back to a period nearly approaching at least in antiquity to the time when they are supposed to have been produced. The persons, moreover, from whom we have this attestation, give herein not their own private opinion or *authority* merely, but their *testimony* to the fact of these same works being generally received by all the Christian churches of their time, widely scattered through every part of the Roman Empire. They add to this, a multitude of citations, abundantly proving that the books which they had in their hands, agreed in all essential respects with those copies which have reached our times. This evidence, we repeat, though of the same kind with that on which we receive the whole of ancient lite-

rature, is much more complete and decisive. The tradition is less interrupted, and the citations proving the identity of the books very much more copious and extensive.

Mr. Evanson, however, makes light of this kind of historical evidence ; partly on the ground that the citations which establish the identity of the books still leave us short by nearly a century of their alleged date, but chiefly because we have after all the testimony only of those professed Christians of the second and third centuries who have been denominated orthodox, and who are consequently according to him liable to the charge of having apostatized from the pure gospel of Jesus Christ to a "blasphemous idolatrous superstition." This he considers as clearly intimated in the prophecies contained in the New Testament itself, of a grand apostasy which was speedily to take place ; from whence he infers that the fathers of that degenerate church were by no means fit judges of the genuine evangelical writings. To this objection it has been thought sufficient to reply, that we appeal to the early writers of the church not as authorities, but merely as witnesses. It is not alleged that the four gospels were placed for the first time in the hands of Irenæus or of Justin, and that they gave their judgment from an examination of the contents,—a judgment on which we are called on to rely from our confidence in their critical skill or sagacity. We may have a very low opinion of them in these respects, and depend nevertheless on their testimony to the facts,—that these books existed in their time,—that they

had been handed down from preceding generations,—that they were widely diffused throughout the Christian world,—that they were and had been statedly read in the public services of the church,—and that they were universally ascribed to the apostles and evangelists by whose names they have ever since been known. It may be true, as Mr. Evanson alleges, and as many others believe, that even at this early period the pure doctrine of the gospel was grossly corrupted; but unless we suppose all moral principle to have been likewise utterly debased, so as to reduce the Christian writers of the time to a lower standard than the heathens around them, we cannot but believe them when they say that these books were generally received as the genuine productions of immediate followers of our Lord.

For the reasons already adverted to, Mr. Evanson does not rely on this sort of evidence, and places his chief stress on the prophecies contained or supposed to be contained in the sacred books, and which have since received their fulfilment. This testimony, he contends, “does not in the least depend on the veracity or credibility of the writer; but every man capable of understanding the meaning of the prediction, and of comparing it with the corresponding events whereby it hath been or is completed, is a competent judge of the degree of proof it affords.” We are far from wishing to undervalue or discredit the evidence of prophecy; but it would seem that its application as a test of canonical Scripture is somewhat precarious; for it happens unfortunately that

the predictions chiefly relied on for this purpose either received their fulfilment at a period *prior* to that at which our author admits that we have sufficient historical evidence of the existence of our sacred books, or else are expressed in terms so obscure and mysterious that later commentators are far from being agreed as to their true import. Of the former class are our Lord's repeated predictions of his own approaching sufferings and death, and more especially of the impending calamities and final destruction of the Jewish state. However important and interesting these might be at the time, however clear their application and complete their fulfilment, they have evidently no reality to us, until the *previous* question is settled, that they were actually delivered so many years before the events happened to which they relate; and the only proof we have of this is contained in the very books whose authority we are seeking to establish. To the latter class must surely be referred the celebrated prophecy of the great apostasy or falling away, and the whole series of visions in that difficult and mysterious book the Apocalypse. Our author everywhere founds his arguments on *his own* interpretation of these prophetic visions, as though their sense was so clear, that he who runs might read and understand them; but he was of course aware that the case is widely different,—that some of the most eminent commentators have disclaimed all pretensions to understand or explain them,—that others have doubted whether they have any prophetic character whatever,—and that in fact all the great events and revolutions,

civil and ecclesiastical, which have taken place in the Christian world from that time to this, have been found as they successively occurred, prefigured in the Apocalypse. In one place* Mr. Evanson seems to acknowledge the obscurity and difficulty of this subject, where he intimates a doubt whether there is one among the clergy who professes to give a rational and satisfactory explanation of it; and those who see so many discordant conjectures advanced to all appearance equally capable of a plausible defence, will feel unwilling to rest their faith on a foundation so unstable, or to be satisfied with a test of genuine Scripture, the application of which seems so vague and uncertain.

Our author is much dissatisfied with the discrepancies observable in the four generally received gospels, which we cannot but think are greatly magnified in his estimate. To him they appear of such a nature, that three at least out of the four must of necessity be rejected. Under these circumstances he is induced to give the preference to that of Luke; discerning in it as he thinks a clearer application of his favourite and indispensable test of completed prophecy, as well as internal evidence of greater care and accuracy in the writer. Having made this selection, he proceeds to depreciate the other three, particularly the "pretended" gospel of Matthew, which he stigmatizes as ill-written, careless, superstitious, and, in short, utterly undeserving of the attention and respect

* Letter to Dr. Priestley's Young Man, p. 19.

with which all Christian critics till his time had with one consent agreed to receive it. From the manner in which he expresses himself, it might be supposed that these works were altogether on a level with the apocryphal gospel of the Infancy, the gospel of Peter, and other gross forgeries of a later age. The contrast between them however is too striking to escape the observation of the most careless reader; and if we were to suppose, as Mr. Evanson intimates, that the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John were forgeries palmed upon the Christian world in the second or third century for the purpose of giving countenance to the corrupt doctrines of an apostate church, the style of the books universally rejected as spurious,—of the larger epistles of Ignatius, and other supposititious writings of that period,—may indicate the character they would doubtless have assumed.

The variations observable in the narratives given of the same events by distinct independent witnesses, are well known to be of two kinds. When they affect the main facts of the story, we are apt to reject the testimony altogether; but when they relate only to minor incidental circumstances, they have often a contrary effect, and strengthen our reliance on the witnesses, by removing the suspicion of a concerted attempt to deceive. Most readers have thought the variations in the gospel histories belonged to the latter class; to Mr. Evanson they appeared in a different light; and it must be acknowledged that it is by no means easy to *define* the two classes in such a

manner that every one shall draw exactly the same line of separation between them. It must be left to each individual to judge for himself of the impression which the testimony produces on his own mind. We have no doubt that Mr. Evanson endeavoured to form this judgment candidly and impartially. In bringing forward views of this subject so strange and revolting to the great majority of his readers, he was at least honest and sincere. Nor is there the slightest ground for the suspicion which some have not been slow to express, that he was actuated by a lurking desire to invalidate the gospel history, or to weaken the faith of his readers either in the character of the messenger or in the divine origin of his message. His object undoubtedly was to remove what appeared to him to be serious difficulties, and to place the credit of those portions of the New Testament whose authority he acknowledged on a more firm and satisfactory basis. No man was ever a more decided, conscientious, and rational Christian, or more desirous to place the evidence for his faith in such a light as was at once conclusive to his own mind, and likely in his estimation to bring conviction home to the minds of others. Nothing therefore can be more groundless and uncharitable than the imputation which some have cast on the author of the "Dissonance," of being only an infidel in disguise. It is true, indeed, that some of his objections against those books of the New Testament whose authority he impugns are to be found in the writings of many declared unbelievers; but they are adduced in a very different

spirit; and no candid enquirer can pay to this remarkable work the attention which it deserves and will repay, without having his mind exercised and roused to a more diligent examination of the real grounds and reasons of his faith, whether he see reason to embrace the author's hypothesis or not.

Though the "Dissonance" excited a good deal of attention when it first appeared, it did not meet with many answerers. The only one deserving of much notice was Dr. Priestley, who published in the form of "Letters addressed to a Young Man," an examination of Mr. Evan-son's test of canonical Scripture, and a vindication of those parts of the received New Testament which he proposed to reject as spurious. To this pamphlet Mr. Evan-son replied in "A Letter to Dr. Priestley's Young Man;" and here the discussion ended. In fact, there would have been no good purpose answered by carrying it further. Both parties had already done the best they could for their respective arguments; not, it must be confessed, without the occasional employment on both sides of disparaging expressions and unpleasant personalities, which we observe with peculiar regret when they tend to estrange two good and able men, who could not but estimate highly each other's talents and character, and who were besides so nearly agreed on many of the most important questions disputed among Christians.

About the year 1796, finding himself affected by various infirmities incident to advancing years, Mr. Evan-son sold his farm in Suffolk, and after residing a short time at a village near

Woodbridge, in that county, removed to the west of England, where he spent the remainder of his life, chiefly at the pleasant village of Lympston, in Devonshire. Here he found a small Unitarian society, at that time under the charge of the Rev. John Jervis; with whom he was accustomed statedly to join in public worship, and occasionally took the place of their respected minister in the pulpit; though his later opinions led him to disapprove of the practice of appropriating the business of religious instruction as a distinct profession.

In 1802, Mr. Evanson published "Reflections on the State of Religion in Christendom; particularly in the Countries situated within the limits of the Western Roman Empire, at the Commencement of the Nineteenth Century." This remarkable publication seems to have been suggested in a great measure by the then state of public affairs, and the influence they were expected by many to exercise, in bringing on still more extensive and permanent changes in the ecclesiastical as well as the political condition of the European nations. It is written with considerable ability, though strongly tinged by the peculiar characters of Mr. Evanson's mind. After adverting to what appeared at that time to be the rapidly increasing spread of infidelity and atheism, he enters on a brief but just and forcible review of the general argument; first for the being and providence of God, as evinced in the creation and moral government of the world, and afterwards in proof of the Jewish and Christian revelations. The latter, as may be expected, he derives for

the most part from the fulfilment of the series of prophecies, extending through the whole range of the sacred books; but more especially of those in the Apocalypse, on which the author is always disposed to lay the greatest stress. The greater part of the pamphlet is accordingly devoted to a paraphrase or application of these prophetic visions; tracing throughout their real or supposed connexion with many of the leading events and revolutions of the intervening ages down to the present time, as they affected the state of religion in the nations of western Europe; to which, for what reason it is not very easy to understand, we are to suppose that these prophecies relate exclusively. Mr. Evanson considers the complete establishment of the antichristian system originally introduced by Constantine, as having taken place under the ten kingdoms which had been formed by the irruption of the barbarous tribes, and the dismemberment of the Roman Empire, at or near the commencement of the seventh century. Hence, as the prevalence of this apostasy is limited to 1260 prophetic days or years, he ventured to predict its final overthrow in the course of not more than sixty years. Forty of these have since elapsed; and it can hardly be said that there is any present appearance of our approaching nearer to this wished-for consummation. It is true that the day of the Lord often comes as a thief in the night, when we are least expecting it; but for that very reason it may be doubted whether it would not be wise to abstain from anticipating its arrival. In one part of this discourse, the leading "peculiar"

doctrines which have so long passed for orthodoxy under the influence of this strong delusion, are exposed with great eloquence and ability.*

In the summer of 1803, Mr. Evanson quitted Lympston, and after some time settled at Colford, in Gloucestershire, where he spent the short remainder of his days. His health was now giving way; a disposition to asthma, to which he had always been liable, increased; and in February 1805, he was seized with a stricture of the œsophagus, which prevented his taking a sufficient quantity of nourishment, and reduced him, though by slow degrees, to great bodily weakness. Under the pressure of these infirmities he gradually declined till the 24th of September, when, "with the greatest fortitude and most perfect composure, from reflection on a life spent in a uniform endeavour to obey the commands and follow the example of his great Master, he laid himself down to rest; and so composed was his sleep, that about five o'clock in the morning he had breathed his last, some minutes before it was perceived by his mournfully attending friends."†

During all this period his mental powers appear to have been unimpaired; and in May 1805, he published a spirited pamphlet in answer to the Bishop of Gloucester's "Thoughts on the Trinity," entitled "Second Thoughts on the Trinity, recommended in a Letter to the Right Rev. the Bishop of Gloucester." In

* See "Reflections, &c.," 2nd edit. pp. 120—140.

† Monthly Repository, i. 60.

this tract he dwells on the same arguments as in the preceding, and certainly with undiminished vigour and animation. He concludes in the following terms, which seem dictated by the consciousness that it was probably his last effort on behalf of principles which were recommended to his regard by nothing but a sincere persuasion that they constituted the pure and uncorrupted gospel of Christ: "Whether my public efforts on this or any other occasion, may prove productive in any manner of such salutary effects as I fondly propose by them, depends entirely on the will of the Supreme Disposer of all human events. He knoweth, that I am actuated in them solely by benevolent, and, as far as concerns this world, by the most disinterested motives. And to his gracious, paternal disposal, I cheerfully resign myself and every thing that is mine."*

About the same time he was engaged in preparing a second edition of the "Dissonance," which appeared shortly after his decease. It is substantially the same as the first, except in a more distinct and convenient arrangement, and the softening of several offensive expressions. The author has also been led by the further application and development of his principles, to reject one or two other passages, which had before passed unnoticed; particularly the history of the temptation, as given in the fourth chapter of Luke, which he conceives to have been interpolated in a later age.

We need not say that Mr. Evanson was a

* Second Thoughts, &c., p. 60.

man of inflexible integrity and thoroughly conscientious. That he was a sincere Christian, no one can for a moment doubt who has any proper knowledge either of his life or his writings. That he was also actuated by the true spirit of Christ in the ordinary intercourse and relations of life, is abundantly manifested by the extraordinary influence which he acquired as a Christian minister and pastor, notwithstanding his open avowal of unpopular and startling opinions, and by the warm attachment of his personal friends and disciples. His learning was accurate and extensive, both in sacred and profane literature, and his talents as a critic and controversialist very considerable. At the same time we cannot but think that the candid and impartial reader of his works will not fail to perceive that his mind had become inordinately possessed by *one idea*, which recurs incessantly, and prevents him from giving to other considerations the attention to which they are entitled. But to whatever extent we may demur to some of his peculiar views, his bold and uncompromising avowal of Unitarian principles, and the sacrifice of worldly station and prospects which he made on their account, unquestionably entitle him to a distinguished place in our list of Unitarian worthies.

In 1807, two volumes of Mr. Evanson's sermons were published, with a memoir of the author prefixed, by his friend, the Rev. George Rogers, Rector of Sproughton, in Suffolk. These sermons are on the whole such as we should expect from the author's talents and reputation as a preacher. They are for the

most part plain, popular, and practical; they are calculated, as the editor justly observes, "to give clear ideas of the merciful and gracious designs of the Almighty, in the revelation of his will to mankind in both covenants; and tend strongly to convince the mind and confirm the faith of every enquirer into the evidences of these dispensations."*

* Memoir, p. 50.

ROBERT TYRWHITT

WAS descended from a family of distinction in Lincolnshire. He was the third son of the Rev. Dr. Robert Tyrwhitt, Rector of St. James's, Westminster, and Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's. His maternal grandfather was the well-known, learned, and pious Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London. His eldest brother, Thomas Tyrwhitt, became Under Secretary-at-War, and Clerk to the House of Commons; but attained a much higher and more durable distinction as a profound scholar, antiquary, and critic. Robert was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, where he took his first degree in 1757, and proceeded to that of M.A. in 1760. Having taken orders at the usual period, he was soon afterwards offered the appointment of chaplain to the Bishop of Winchester; but declined it, probably owing to the influence of scruples which had already sprung up in his mind on the matter of subscription.

Of this learned and excellent person we have reason to regret the scantiness of our biographical notices. It is true that his course of life was singularly uniform, and devoid of remarkable events, and his publications were comparatively few and of small extent; but the intimate and highly-valued friend of Jebb and of Wakefield,—who is recorded by Lindsey

as worthy of a most honorable place in the list of Unitarian confessors, and to whose high character for talents and learning, as well as for piety, integrity, liberality, and benevolence, we have the strongest testimony from those who were themselves so competent to judge,—naturally excites our curiosity to know more of one who possessed so many claims to the cordial esteem of all who had the privilege of his friendship. But his retired habits, and extreme disinclination to obtrude himself upon the public, have placed the gratification of this curiosity beyond our reach.

At an early period Mr. Tyrwhitt was elected a fellow of his college; and here he continued to reside to the close of a long life, for nearly forty years after the progress of his religious opinions had led him to retire from his fellowship, as well as to abandon his reasonable expectations of church preferment. This progress was probably slow and gradual; but from the first he shewed himself an earnest friend of liberal principles, of a spirit of free examination and enquiry, and of such reforms in the constitution and discipline of the University of which he was a member, as might tend to promote the love and general diffusion of truth. In his honest exertions for the furtherance of these great objects, he was an active and zealous fellow-labourer with his friend Mr. Jebb; and, like him, when the cause of reform appeared to be hopeless, and when the natural course of his own researches had brought him to the adoption of conclusions far removed from the standards of his church, he provided for

his own peace of mind by withdrawing from that establishment which persisted in demanding an outward assent to dogmas in his opinion unauthorized by Scripture.

In the meantime, however, he laboured earnestly, not only for his own relief, but, as far as possible, to remove the burden from those who were to come after him; and with this view, in December 1771, he proposed a *grace*, or resolution of the senate of the University, excusing the candidates for the first degree in arts from subscribing articles of faith, which it was in the nature of things impossible that they should have studied. The proposition involved no change in the constitution or doctrines of the church; it has always been the practice at Dublin; as it was even at Cambridge till the time of James the First, when the present custom was adopted by the voluntary act of the University itself. Nevertheless it was rejected, on the ground that the University had no power of making so material a change in its own constitution, and that the times were not favourable to so great an undertaking, which required the slow and wise deliberation of the supreme legislature, not the partial determination of a few academics.

In connexion with Mr. Tyrwhitt's exertions on this occasion, his distinguished friend Mr. Jebb has placed on record the following high and well-merited eulogium:

“With respect to the character of this gentleman, it may justly be said to be above all praise. His strong abilities, extensive learning, strict integrity, and most amiable manners,

united with cool judgment and determined resolution, would reflect a lustre on the most distinguished station. And it is one of the strongest reasons for the removal of subscriptions, that the imposition of human formularies of faith and doctrine, and the acknowledged imperfections in the forms of public worship, deprive the church of England of the honour of any longer numbering among her worthies so truly honest and venerable a man. I should hurt his delicacy, were I to mention the sacrifices he has made at the shrine of integrity and honour; sacrifices only to be equalled by those of the Rev. Dr. Robertson, author of a tract entitled "An Attempt to explain the words Reason, Substance, &c.," first published in 1768, and well worthy of the perusal of every friend to religious liberty and virtue."*

From this passage it appears that Mr. Tyrwhitt had already made known his secession from the established church. The exact time and circumstances of this secession we have not been able to ascertain; and it is a remarkable and highly characteristic fact, that so important a transaction should have been left to be inferred from a casual allusion to it in the writings of another person. We are of course equally in the dark as to the precise nature and extent of the sacrifices here referred to; but we may fairly presume that they were far from inconsiderable, when we take into account, not

* Letters on the Subject of Subscription to the Liturgy and Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England; first printed in the Whitehall Evening Post, under the signature of Paulinus. 1772. Jebb's Works, i. 201.

only the eminent talents and acquirements of Mr. Tyrwhitt, but his family connexions, which would probably have placed valuable preferment within his reach, if from such a motive he had stooped, like so many others, to act in opposition to his secret convictions and the remonstrances of his conscience.

In 1771, Mr. Tyrwhitt being called upon by the statutes of the University to perform the customary exercise in the divinity schools, then presided over by the Regius Professor, Dr. Rutherford, he proposed the following questions for discussion: "1. The prayers of Christians ought to be directed to God alone, the Father of Jesus Christ. 2. All those are to be accounted Christians, who acknowledge Jesus as the true Messiah, though they believe him to be greatly inferior to God, or even a mere man. 3. The Christian law is not sanctioned by eternal punishments. 4. No article of the Christian faith, as delivered in the Scriptures, is repugnant to right reason." All these questions were objected to and refused, though the last was the same which had been proposed and maintained on a similar occasion by Dr. Clarke. This rejection, as Mr. Jebb very justly observes, did no credit either to the candour or the judgment of the Professor, and rather argued a secret distrust, lest certain opinions should gain converts by an open discussion of them. The very suggestion, however, of such questions for discussion, shews to what an extent the proposer had been accustomed to exercise his mind in that free and unrestrained enquiry on the most important subjects, which it is the

tendency and intention of articles and creeds as much as possible to prevent.

Mr. Tyrwhitt for some time after this continued to hold his fellowship in Jesus College; but, in the year 1777, he resigned it, conceiving that it bound him to an attendance on the established service in the college chapel, which he could not conscientiously comply with. Thus from the same honourable and upright views which had always directed his life and conduct, he resolved no longer to enjoy the lucrative advantages of his place, when he could not, or felt that he ought not, to perform the duty it required.

Though no longer a member of the College, Mr. Tyrwhitt continued to occupy apartments in it, and there he passed the entire remainder of his life in the tranquil and undisturbed seclusion of literary leisure. It was probably the mode of life most conformable to his studious habits and prevailing disposition. Nevertheless it is much to be regretted on many accounts. It may be doubted, whether a life spent in the mere cultivation of the mind, or in the pursuit of knowledge, even on the most important subjects which can occupy our attention, is a sufficient service to render to Him whose inspiration has given us understanding; unless some adequate fruits of this cultivation are allowed to appear in active labours to enlighten and improve mankind. We have the testimony of Dr. Jebb, than whom none could be a more competent judge, "that he knew not any equal master of Scripture learning, or so able an interpreter of the sacred volume, as Mr. Tyrwhitt." Mr.

Wakefield also repeatedly speaks of Mr. Tyrwhitt in the highest terms, "as a man extremely well versed in every department of theological learning, and of so temperate and judicious a character, that his judgment was always the result of impartial conviction." "Believe me," he adds, "the suffrage of such a person weighs more with me, than a chorus of voices from ordinary critics."* Mr. Lindsey, after quoting the first of these testimonies, proceeds as follows: "Besides then, that noble example of integrity and testimony to the sole worship of the one living and true God, which he has long exhibited, we hope he will remember what further demands his fellow-creatures have upon him for this great talent entrusted to him for the general good."†

If Mr. Tyrwhitt had been induced to listen to this appeal, we are persuaded, not only that he would have arrived at high distinction as a scholar and a divine, but that he would have reaped a reward, in his estimation doubtless of much more value, in the consciousness of having essentially contributed to the diffusion of important truth, and the progress of religion and virtue. This persuasion is founded, not only on these high testimonies of his friends, but on the great value we attach to the very few productions of his pen which he permitted to make their way into public view.

We have already stated, that in 1783 a society was formed "for Promoting the Knowledge

* Wakefield's Memoirs, 2nd edit. vol. i. p. 484.

† Lindsey's Historical View, 497.

of the Scriptures." An introductory sketch of their plan was drawn up by Dr. Jebb, and met with the full concurrence and approbation of Mr. Tyrwhitt, who was one of the original members of the society, and was expected to take an active part in its support. As far as we know, however, the only papers which he contributed to the "Commentaries and Essays," are two short but very interesting dissertations "on the Creation of all things by Christ," and "on the Resurrection of the Dead through the man Jesus Christ." These tracts have received the attention which they well deserve, and have been frequently reprinted. The first contains the most complete and satisfactory statement which is any where to be found in so small a compass, of the distinction between the creation of the natural material world, and that *moral* creation, in the renewing of the heart and mind, and the introduction of a new and better covenant extended to the whole human race, which appears to be spoken of by the apostle Paul, in various passages, commonly thought to ascribe the original formation of the external universe to Jesus Christ. This apostle, in common with the other writers of the New Testament, often speaks of persons as things; as when he says that all things were before shut up under sin:* that all things are reconciled unto God:† that all things are quickened or made alive by him:‡ that they are reduced under one head, and subjected to Christ.§ We are therefore not only authorized, but required

* Gal. iii. 22. † Col. i. 20. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 13. § Eph. i. 10.

by consistency, to conclude, that when he says "all things were *created* by Christ," he means that all men, both Jews and Gentiles, were created anew; that they were brought into a new state of existence, and introduced to more excellent hopes and prospects under a new and better dispensation. In the second dissertation the author endeavours to shew that the apostle's reasoning, when he uses the words, "as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead," implies a persuasion on his part of the resemblance between Adam and Christ as to nature in every material respect, sin only excepted. If he had imagined that Christ possessed a superangelic or divine nature, instead of a *parallel*, we should have found a *contrast*, as thus, "although by man came death, the resurrection of the dead came by a person of a nature far superior to that of man." And he justly asks, if we believe that the resurrection to eternal life came by or through the instrumentality of a man, is our belief on that account less reasonable or important? or is the great fact less real or efficacious in consoling our minds and sanctifying our lives? This dissertation is said to have been preached as a sermon before the University, as also another on the baptismal form, Matt. xxviii. 19.*

After the resignation of his fellowship, Mr.

* See the Obituary of Mr. Tyrwhitt, M. Repository, xii. 316. The second discourse here mentioned has never fallen in the way of the present writer, nor can he meet with any other reference to it. A sermon from such a preacher, on such a subject, and on such an occasion, must surely be interesting and curious.

Tyrwhitt was for a considerable time reduced to a very narrow income, on which he lived cheerfully and contentedly, till by the death of his brother, in 1786, he came into possession of a property which enabled him to act up to the dictates of a generous heart. His personal habits were as simple and unexpensive as before; and the largest portion of his income was employed in acts of unostentatious liberality, and in the promotion of objects in which he imagined that the benefit of his friends, or the good of mankind, or the interests of truth and virtue, were concerned. Thus when the patronage of the University, after having been extended to Mr. Wakefield in the publication of the first three parts of his "*Sylva Critica*," was withdrawn from the remainder of that curious and learned work, Mr. Tyrwhitt stepped in to supply the deficiency, and the fourth and fifth parts were printed at his expense.* But his benevolence was not confined to any sect or party. He looked upon all as the children of

* About this time, Mr. Wakefield published his Translation of the New Testament, with a dedication to Mr. Tyrwhitt, in which, after celebrating the various excellencies of his friend, particularly his *beneficence* and *truth*, in the style, and no doubt with more than the sincerity, often observable on such occasions, he proceeds as follows: "But give me leave to exercise one of these noble qualities on this occasion, by assuring you, that I join with your other friends in censuring one defect for which we can scarcely devise an adequate apology. Why will you suffer us to profit no more by your dispassionate and discerning mind, so long and successfully exercised upon the most important subject, the doctrines of revelation? Our regret is but increased, by the benefit which we have already reaped from your exertions; and we wish, either that you had the confidence of others, or they your abilities."

one common parent; and himself, as merely a steward under Providence for what remained after the gratification of his natural wants and very moderate desires.

We have little more to record of the declining years of this excellent and worthy man. He continued to reside in the College, where nearly the whole of his life had been spent, and from which he very rarely absented himself. Here, notwithstanding his separation from the church, he was highly respected by the most distinguished members both of his own College and of the University at large. At length he terminated a peaceful and blameless life, by a tranquil departure, on the 25th of April, 1817.

PAUL HENRY MATY

WAS born in 1745. His grandfather was one of the French protestant clergymen expelled from France at the revocation of the edict of Nantes; a race of men distinguished in the history of those times for their firm endurance of the hardships and sufferings inflicted by the iron hand of persecution, in an age when much was perpetrated in this way which the milder spirit of the present times it is hoped would not permit. They do not appear, however, to have been fully imbued with the principles on which the iniquity of all persecution for conscience sake is now so clearly established, and acknowledged (in theory at least) by all persons of candour and reflection. The ecclesiastical history of their own church, while it subsisted in their native land, and even afterwards in their various settlements as scattered and powerless exiles, was of a character the most arbitrary and exclusive; and in their demands of a thorough adherence to the most rigid form of what they called orthodoxy, they were not less strict and unyielding than the administrators of those more prosperous churches who could call in the secular arm to enforce their decrees.

It would appear probable that Mr. Maty was somewhat in advance of his brethren in this respect, as well as in the disposition to think

for himself on religious subjects ; for we find that, having originally destined his son to his own profession, he was induced to alter his views in consequence of the disgust arising from the proceedings of the synod on account of his sentiments concerning the trinity. What these proceedings were, or how far his sentiments on this point deviated from the standards of his church, we are not informed. His son however (who was born at Montfort, near Utrecht, in 1718) was in consequence brought up to the medical profession, and having taken his degree of M.D. at Leyden, came in 1740 to settle in England, where he acquired considerable reputation and eminence both as a physician and as a man of letters. In the former capacity he was a zealous promoter of the practice of inoculation for the small-pox, then recently introduced from the east ; in the latter, he began, in 1750, to publish at the Hague a periodical publication, in the French language, entitled "*Journal Brittanique*," containing an account of the principal English publications of the day. This was on the whole favourably received, and was the means of introducing the author to a connexion with the British Museum, of which he ultimately became the principal librarian. He was also for several years secretary to the Royal Society. These offices he filled with great acceptance, and was generally esteemed for the benevolence of his private character and the extent and variety of his literary information. He died in 1776.

His son, the subject of the present article, was

educated first at Westminster School, and afterwards at Trinity College, Cambridge; where, having acquired considerable distinction, he obtained a travelling fellowship, by means of which he passed three years on the continent. He then entered the church, and was appointed chaplain to Lord Stormont, at that time ambassador at the court of France. Soon after this he married one of the daughters of Joseph Clerke, Esq., of Weathersfield, in Essex, and sister to Capt. Charles Clerke, the companion of the celebrated Cook, and finally his successor in command in that unfortunate voyage which proved fatal to both these distinguished officers.

There is no reason to doubt, that Mr. Maty's rising reputation, the talents he had already displayed, and the desirable connexions he had now formed, would have secured his speedy elevation to some eligible preferment, if not to an important and conspicuous station in the church. His merits as a preacher at this period, are spoken of in high terms, and not without reason, if we may be allowed to judge of them by the specimens of his pulpit compositions afterwards published in a posthumous volume. But he now began to entertain scruples concerning the doctrines of the church, which induced him to decline all offers of preferment, and, shortly after his father's death, to withdraw entirely from its service. His reasons for doing so he has stated at some length in a declaration inserted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1777, from which the following is extracted:—

“British Museum, Oct. 22, 1777.

“I should neither have withdrawn myself from the ministry of the church of England, nor have troubled the public with my reasons for so doing, if I had not thought myself obliged to both. I trust, therefore, that both the step itself, and this account of my motives for taking it, will be treated with candour.

“As a Christian, thoroughly satisfied with the evidence, and deeply solicitous about the success, of whatever has a tendency to promote the cause of Christianity, I thought myself called upon to study the controversy about subscriptions. The following is an account of the effect that study has had upon my mind, which I offer as a vindication of my own conduct only, and hope it will be accepted as such.

“I have no objection to subscriptions in general to articles of faith, which, notwithstanding what has been urged against them by Burnet, the masterly author of the ‘Confessional,’ and others, seem to me both lawful and expedient; all the arguments that have been brought against them tending only to prove that their use has been less hitherto than it might have been, owing to the narrow principles on which they have been framed; considerations which, in my opinion, do not outweigh the objections stated by Dr. Balguy to having none at all.

“But satisfied as I should be for myself, with a subscription of some sort, and probably not a very general one neither, I cannot comply with that required of me to the present articles and liturgy, for the following reasons:—

“First,—After bestowing all the pains which I am able to give in informing myself what is the true Scripture doctrine of the trinity, the only conclusion I have been able to arrive at is, that I see no sufficient proof of the Athanasian, and rather incline to the Arian hypothesis.

“Secondly,—I am clear, that the very dangerous doctrine that unbaptized children are subject to the penalties of sin, is asserted in the ninth article, and still more strongly in the service for the public baptism of infants, and that it is not taught in the Bible.

“Thirdly,—I cannot help thinking, notwithstanding what has been written by Dr. Tucker and others upon the subject, that the 17th article does teach absolute predestination; a doctrine likewise not found in the Bible, and of a still more destructive tendency than that of original sin. These are my principal objections: I have others to many parts of the service, but do not mention them, partly because they are to things generally complained of, and which will probably be removed whenever a revision takes place; and partly, because I do not know how far, had they been the only ones, they would have led me to think of a separation.

“This separation I do now think myself authorized to; because, believing the doctrines themselves to be erroneous, I am not satisfied with any reasons that have been given for continuing to subscribe them under such a persuasion. I cannot be thoroughly satisfied, that either the words in which it is drawn, or the king's declaration, justify me, who think with

Arminius on the subject, in subscribing the 17th article ; the more, as it is a subject which in my opinion is to be disputed upon, and the obvious sense of the article preached *against*, whenever opportunity offers.

“ If the plea made for subscribing this one could avail me, I have no such plea for subscribing the articles relative to the trinity, or for continuing to read the parts of the liturgy relative either to them or to the doctrine of original sin. These were not subjects of dispute at the time the articles were drawn, and of course no *salvo* was made for them, except the general one of the sixth article. But surely Dr. Waterland very fully confuted Dr. Clarke’s ideas on this subject, in his ‘Case of Arian Subscriptions ;’ and if he had not, the author of the ‘Confessional’ hath unanswerably proved that if the sixth article had been designed to justify those who, willingly binding themselves to support the opinions of the majority, propagate opinions different from theirs, it might have justified the Roman Catholics, it might have justified the first seditious and mad disgraces of protestantism, whereas against both these the articles are well known to have been made. Neither Dr. Powell’s plea in favour of first subscriptions, nor Mr. Hey’s considerations on obsolete ordinances, can be of service to me, who at this time of life am not at liberty to subscribe upon authority, and whose objections both to articles and liturgy are too extensive to find a solution in the doctrine of obsolete ordinances.

“ Finally,—I can neither submit to acquiesce

in silence after having made my objections known, nor take upon me to alter the service of the church as long as I continue to profess myself a minister of it. The latter, besides its being of dangerous example, I rather think my voluntary promise to use the established liturgy precludes me from. With the former, I could only have been satisfied on the supposition that the things complained of were indifferent, or, as they have been thought to be by many good men, of little importance; but as I should in that case have thought it my duty to have waited for a change by public authority, without expressing any disapprobation, public or private, so, being of a very different opinion, that is, believing firmly that some of the obnoxious doctrines strike at the root of all religion, natural as well as revealed, and that nothing is of little importance which the Deists and Methodists can make so formidable use of as they are known to do of the subscriptions of those among us who subscribe what they profess not to believe; under these circumstances I have nothing left me, but the part on which I have determined, and that is,

“To withdraw myself from ministering in the church of England, either till our forms shall have undergone such a revision and alteration as I think they stand in need of, or till time and further study shall have prevailed upon me to view them in a different light from what I can do at present. This I therefore thus publicly declare that I do, with becoming humility, with the utmost diffidence and regret for differing from such numbers of

wise and good men, and with the resolution to persist in such studies as may best serve the general cause of religion, at the same time that they bid fairest for affording my own mind the conviction none can more ardently wish me than myself.

“I will only add, that I do not mean to preclude myself from officiating in any other protestant congregation; on the contrary, should I see reason to believe that there is any number of pious people disposed to attend a place of public worship where a liturgy, not materially different from Dr. Clarke’s, shall be used, I will take the first opportunity which presents itself of opening a place of public worship with such a liturgy. In this I shall do no more than follow that strong inclination which first led me to adopt, and will ever incline me to return to, the most pleasing, the most honourable, the most useful, of all occupations.

“HENRY MATY.”

It will be seen that Mr. Maty’s reasons for withdrawing from the established church were not founded on any general objections to an establishment as such, nor even upon a doubt as to the propriety of exacting subscriptions to some sort of formula or confession from its officiating ministers; though it is probable that he would have limited this to a comparatively small number of fundamental propositions. But it is expressed in a tone of manly independence, and gives a favourable impression both of the head and heart of the writer. His modesty and the moderation of his mind, as Mr. Lindsey justly observes, are also very conspicuous in

his confining himself to a plain and simple statement of the reasons on which his scruples were founded, without touching on any matters of a personal nature. He might for example have dwelt on the amount of the sacrifice he was making to his principles, in giving up the fair prospect which seemed to lie before him of a comfortable provision for life, if not of affluence and distinction. Nor does he take any notice of the alternative which it imposed, of a life of hardship and struggle with limited and slender means, in the laborious and often profitless employment of a literary man, who, without a profession to fall back upon, seeks for bread by the exercise of his literary talents.

In 1782, Mr. Maty commenced the publication of a periodical Review, chiefly of foreign publications, distinguished from the generality of works of this nature in the circumstance of its bearing his name in the title-page, as the editor and conductor, who was personally responsible to the public for the sentiments which it contained. In fact, it consisted for the most part of articles, the produce of his own pen, relating to the principal literary productions of the day, but chiefly to such as were connected with general literature and theology. As might be expected, this Review is distinguished throughout by the liberal, manly, and independent spirit which marked the critical act of the conductor's life, and is on the whole such as to place the learning and ability of the writer in a very favourable point of light.

It might perhaps have been supposed, that the peculiar character of this work, in having

the sanction of its author's name affixed to it would have been an additional recommendation. It might have been supposed that the public in general, and especially that large class of readers who are apt to take statements upon trust, and to adopt conclusions not so much on their own merits as in reliance on the authority of others, would be solicitous to know to whose guidance they were committing themselves. It might be thought that even they who were accustomed to think for themselves, would have an additional security that their time would not be thrown away in examining the opinions and arguments of a writer whose character and former productions were known to them, and whose past career might serve as a sort of pledge that he would not forfeit his reputation by glaring inconsistencies, or by statements and sentiments which he knew or believed to be unfounded. It might even be thought that most persons would read with a more lively interest and pleasure the writings of an author with whom they were acquainted, if it were only by name; and still more so, if, as may often happen, it should prove to be one for whom they had a high personal esteem or regard. The public also might seem to have a right to the security arising from the responsibility incurred by a writer who, in putting his name to his productions, stakes his moral and literary reputation on the accuracy of his statements; especially in the case of periodical works, which enjoy an extensive circulation, and thus may be supposed to exercise a powerful influence over the public mind. On this and similar

grounds many have been led to think, that it would involve no dangerous infraction of the liberty of the press, and would in other respects be a beneficial change, if the process of publication could be so regulated as to deprive any man of the power of printing a sentence without the sanction of his name.

Experience however seems to have decided against these apparently natural suggestions ; and it has been found that the most popular and extensively circulated periodicals have been such as were shrouded under the veil of anonymous publication ; while comparatively few of those which have been conducted by editors generally known to the world have been permanently successful. Maty's Review accordingly struggled on for three or four years, but was at length given up for want of encouragement.

Notwithstanding the unmerited prejudice which was doubtless attached to his name in various high quarters by his retirement from the church and the public avowal of his reasons for it, a son of Dr. Maty retained influence enough to procure an inferior appointment in the British Museum, where he was afterwards advanced to the office of one of the under librarians, in the department of natural history and antiquities. In 1778, he also succeeded Dr. Horsley as one of the secretaries of the Royal Society ; an office which he was induced to resign in 1784, in consequence of certain warm debates which took place at that period respecting the administration of that learned body. To compensate for the defalcation in

his income occasioned by this step (in which it has been thought by some that his independent spirit was more conspicuous than his prudence or sound judgment), he undertook on moderate terms to read the Greek, Latin, French, and Italian classics with such persons as might be desirous of completing their knowledge of those languages. But it does not appear that this employment turned out very profitable.

Mr. Maty soon afterwards fell into a bad state of health, and died in 1787, at the age of forty-two. His remains were attended to the grave by his friends and associates at the Museum, and by Dr. Calder, Dr. Disney, and Mr. Lindsey, who performed the funeral service. He was interred at Bunhill Fields, as near as possible to his valued friend Dr. Jebb. He appears to have died in narrow circumstances; and shortly after his decease, a volume of his sermons was printed for the benefit of his family. On the whole it will be thought a well-merited commendation which was bestowed on him by Mr. Lindsey,* who speaks of him as an ingenious excellent scholar and worthy character, whose name is entitled to an honourable place in the list of those who, to their worldly loss, have borne open testimony against the impositions of human authority in the things of religion, especially against the corruptions thereby introduced with respect to the divine unity.

* Historical View, &c. p. 515.

JOHN DISNEY, D.D., F.S.A.

THE family of Disney is an ancient and highly respectable one. The founder of it appears to have accompanied the conqueror; and many of the name are recorded in subsequent periods as having attained the honour of knighthood, and as filling the various public offices suited to their position and station in society. John Disney, grandfather of Dr. Disney, after sustaining for many years with considerable distinction the office of an active and able country magistrate, at the age of forty took orders and entered into the church. He afterwards became rector of St. Mary's, Nottingham, where he died in 1730. Previous to his time, the family were zealous non-conformists, and frequently suffered for their attachment to this cause in the troublesome times of Charles II. and James II.

John, the third son of John Disney, Esq., of Lincoln, was born Sept. 28, 1746. He received his early education at Wakefield School, at that time in high repute, under the mastership of the Rev. John Clark. He was at first intended for the profession of the bar, but the close application he gave to this object having affected his health, he was advised to change his destination. He accordingly devoted himself to the church, and with this view he was entered at Peterhouse, Cambridge, in 1764; and, after passing with great credit through the prescribed course of study, was ordained in 1768, and proceeded to the degree of LL.B. in 1770.

At Cambridge he appears to have imbibed the liberal views which distinguished him through life, in the society of the honourable band who were at that time contending earnestly for important reforms in the studies and discipline of the University itself, labouring to promote a spirit of free and enlightened enquiry, and the cause of liberty in every form, so far as was practicable under the fetters imposed by antiquated systems, and the controlling genius of long established institutions. So early as April, 1768, he made his first appearance from the press, as a fellow-labourer in this cause, by the publication of "Animadversions on the Conduct of Dr. Rutherford in the Controversy which has followed the publication of the Confessional; with a Word to the Author of an Essay on Establishments in Religion."

On taking orders, he received an honourable testimony to his conduct, his talents, and his principles, in the appointment of honorary chaplain to the venerable Edmund Law then the Master of his College, and Bishop of Carlisle; a man who well deserves the high reputation he has acquired, and will retain, as an acute and profound reasoner, and a useful writer in ethics, metaphysics, and theology; and for the frankness and candour with which, in the successive editions of his valuable works, he marked the gradual changes which his unremitted researches produced in his views on many disputed questions. He was not a man to suspend his enquiries or shut his eyes against evidence, on the pretence that his mind was made up; but through the whole of a long life, devoted

to the diligent study of the most important subjects which could occupy the attention of the human understanding, he remained open to conviction, and did not hesitate to modify both his opinions and his language, as the additional light he had collected seemed to require. We may be allowed to regret that he did not emancipate himself from the trammels imposed by his rank and station in a Trinitarian establishment, and that on several trying occasions he did not display the fearless and manly independence, as a public man, which might perhaps have been hoped for. But it is too much to expect that a bishop should lay aside his mitre, and follow the steps of a Lindsey, a Jebb, a Robertson, or a Disney.

In 1769, Mr. Disney was presented to the vicarage of Swinderby, and afterwards jointly to the rectory of Panton, both in his native county. At Swinderby he resided for some years, discharging the duties of a country clergyman with exemplary diligence and assiduity, happy in the consciousness of much active usefulness, and in possessing the esteem of many valued friends, and the warm attachment of his parishioners. "I was agreeably situated," he tells us himself, in his 'Reasons for quitting the Church of England,' "in the circle of relations and several esteemed friends, and have lived in a constant kind intercourse with all my parishioners, with whom I have ever found my ministry acceptable. I had extended my usefulness among my neighbours in all the ways I was able. Nor was I forward to think that I could be equally useful under any change of

situation which removed me to a different sphere of action. And, I may add, that I was not insensible even to an acquired partiality to the place of my residence, where on many accounts, and for reasons of a private nature, I could have wished to have continued to the end of my life, in the enjoyment of every accommodation and comfort which a reasonable mind could wish for."

At the same time it is evident, that from the first he was abundantly sensible of the grievance involved in the imposition of subscription. He heartily concurred in the clergy's petition for relief from this heavy burden on the conscience, and was an active member of the committee of the petitioners, in 1772-3. Though it does not appear to what extent he had himself at this time deviated from the public standards of his church, yet there can be no doubt that he participated already in the hope, that if the petition were favourably received, it would lead to a review and amendment of the established forms of public worship. The animated discussions attendant on the preparation of this petition, on its presentation to the House of Commons, and its final abandonment, naturally led to a more thorough examination, not only of the right of imposing either these or any other doctrines as articles of faith, but into the conformity of the doctrines themselves contained in the articles of the church of England with the revealed word of God. The result, in his case, as in that of so many other serious and reflecting persons, was a growing persuasion that not a few of the doctrines to which,

on assuming the clerical profession and duties, he had publicly professed his entire assent, were in no sort of agreement with the Christian Scriptures from whence they are presumed to be derived. He never read the Athanasian creed in the public service, and for some years went so far as to omit also the Nicene creed, and even the litany. Finding himself able to do all this without giving offence to his congregation, while he knowingly exposed himself to the penalties of the law, which his superiors might at any time have inflicted for a deviation from the rubric, which must of course have been notorious, he for some time persuaded himself that he was thereby released from his engagement to conformity. But he was afterwards led to consider his unconditional promise in this respect in a stronger and certainly a juster light than at first. Besides, as he truly observes, the remedy was in itself insufficient; because the Trinitarian expressions and forms of worship, and direct instances of prayer to Jesus Christ occur so frequently, and are so blended and united with other parts of the service, that there is no satisfactory relief to be had by partial omissions, without breaking in upon the regularity and order of the service, to the great annoyance of many serious and devout persons in the congregation; from whom too he had no right to withhold the use of forms provided for them by public authority, and fully consistent with or even required by their conscientious opinions.

In 1777 Mr. Disney preached and published "a Visitation Sermon, addressed to the clergy

of the Archdeaconry of Lincoln, on the Right of Private Judgment," in which the foundation of this right, derived both from reason and from Scripture, is stated in a very forcible and manly style. His private convictions were probably by this time so far matured, as to have led to a determination in his own mind not, under any circumstances, to repeat his subscription to the articles, for the sake of any further preferment or elevation in the church; a determination which, as he had now no favours to ask from the higher powers, no expectations of future advancement which could be compromised by the loss of his reputation for orthodoxy, or by a plain avowal of unpopular or unacceptable opinions, would at least bring with it this advantage, that it enabled him to speak the dictates of his own mind, without apprehension and without reserve.

In February 1782, he preached and published "a Fast Sermon," which is an able and judicious performance, giving a just though forcible representation of public and private ills, and stigmatizing in the terms which it deserved, the iniquitous contest in which our rulers had involved the nation with our American brethren. He does not advert on this occasion to the abuses in the religious establishment, or to the approaching cessation of his own connexion with it,—a subject which must by that time have been deeply occupying his mind; though in one place he refers to "the Bible and the Bible only," which alone is the religion of Protestants, as the sole rule and authority of his discourses to his people, as far as he was com-

petent to the right understanding of it. We may infer from this publication that he had already espoused those decided views of the necessity, both of political and ecclesiastical reform, which afterwards in a more prominent position, characterized his writings and his conduct.

During his residence at Swinderby, it may be presumed that Mr. Disney took a lively interest in the controversies which marked that period, particularly in the discussions excited by the clergy's petition, and other efforts to obtain in various ways an extension of religious liberty. That he was not an inactive spectator, is manifested by various publications which appeared from his pen previous to his quitting the church.

In 1773, appeared a spirited tract, entitled, "Loose Hints on Nonconformity, addressed to the Bishops," pointing out the inconsistency of rigidly insisting on absolute conformity in some points, when it was notorious that there were others in which it was impracticable, and many in which the directions of the rubric and the canons (which yet the clergy are required strictly to observe), were very generally, if not universally, disregarded. Of such instances he presents them with a numerous list; and others might easily have been added.

In 1774, Mr. Disney published "The Rational Christian's Assistant to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper," a useful abridgment of Bishop Hoadly's celebrated "Plain Account," &c., containing the same distinct and rational views of the true intent and purpose of this

institution, but better adapted to practical use, by bringing the doctrine into smaller compass, with less of a controversial character, and divested of the somewhat technical, and not very attractive form of the Bishop's Treatise.

In 1775, Mr. Disney published "a Short View of the Controversies occasioned by the Confessional and the Petition to Parliament," &c. After an interesting prefatory sketch of the exertions made to obtain a relaxation of the grievances complained of, he gives a curious arranged catalogue of more than a hundred publications of various kinds on both sides, many of them of great interest and value.* "This catalogue," he observes, "may be useful as an index or directory to him who is in quest of the truth, and will shew in a little compass the great attention which has been paid to the sacred and unalienable rights of Christians and of Protestants. It is not indeed," he continues, "the most pleasing reflection, that so much debate should have been had about so obvious a truth,—that Christ is king in his own kingdom; or that so many advocates should have been found in these days, and in this country, to defend impositions in a Protestant church, which are not warranted by Scripture, and are only consistent with faith in an earthly infallible guide. All that the advocates for re-

* A large number of the productions whose titles are here given, with other fugitive pieces of the time, relating to the subject, were collected and arranged by Dr. Disney, in 2 volumes 4to. and 12 volumes 8vo., now deposited in Dr. Williams's Library in Redcross Street.

ligious liberty have wished for, was a fair hearing; they appealed to the Scriptures, and to the reason of man; and have so far succeeded in the opinion of the unprejudiced and disinterested, as would have gained them a decisive victory, had they been their judges."

About this time, the degree of D.D. was conferred on him by the University of Edinburgh, on the recommendation of his friend Bishop Law; a degree which, requiring no subscription, he readily accepted. In 1778 he was admitted a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

In 1777, Dr. Disney published a very able pamphlet, entitled "Remarks on Bishop Hurd's Primary Charge to his Clergy." He exposes the fallacy of the arguments by which that learned but somewhat narrow-minded prelate sought to vindicate the practice of the church in exacting subscription to the articles, and gives in a short compass a clear and satisfactory view of the principles on which a resistance to all such pretensions is fully justified. "You say, my Lord, that schism is always an evil, and may be a crime. I think in this matter I can venture to go further than your Lordship; but I apprehend we shall differ widely in what we understand to be schism. A wilful dissent or division from extraneous causes, without conviction, seconded by a zeal not according to knowledge, is, in a few words, my notion of schism; and such I believe to be the meaning of the Scriptures. Under this definition, schism not only *may*, but *must* be a crime. But every dissent from any, or all modes of faith,

from conviction that they are unscriptural, is surely highly commendable and praiseworthy in Christians. Such dissent argues inquiry, which was so much commended in the Bereans; and the voice of heaven, which said ‘Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins,’ seemed to have respect to a previous enquiry. Let every man judge for himself, and be influenced by those arguments and reasons which are conclusive to his own mind. To style such schismatics, is to misuse terms, and to give hard names for want of good reasons. Truth is only to be discovered by frequent and diligent investigation; and cannot wish our studies should leave us in all respects where they found us.”

We cannot wonder that a writer actuated by views and principles such as these, at length followed them out to their only just practical conclusion.

In 1781, appeared a short pamphlet, entitled “Considerations on the Propriety and Expediency of the Clergy acting in the Commission of the Peace;” a practice which our author vindicates on the general principle, that in assuming the clerical character they do not cease to be citizens, and in that capacity are both entitled, and reasonably expected, to exercise the influence which their station gives them for the public good. He is not insensible to the dangers and temptations to which they may thus be exposed; but contends that they ought to cultivate the strength of mind necessary to withstand these temptations, and to fit them to appear as good stewards of the grace of God,

in the right application of all the various talents entrusted to them. It is a question on which something may be said on both sides; but it may perhaps be thought that he has not sufficiently adverted to the tendency of various secular duties in which the clerical magistrate is almost unavoidably involved, to diminish the weight of his character and influence in the proper walk of his profession, as a minister of the gospel of peace, and a servant of Him whose kingdom is not of this world. He himself acted in the commission of the peace for Lincolnshire; and, occasionally residing at Flintham Hall near Newark, a seat belonging to his elder brother, he became in 1780 a Member of the Committee of Association for the County of Nottingham, for promoting a reduction of the public expenditure, and a reform in the representation of the people. He also combined, in some degree, his characters of a clergyman and a magistrate, in a short but judicious pamphlet on "The Duty of Circumspection in Licensing Public Ale-houses."

In 1774, Dr. Disney married Jane, eldest daughter of the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne. Though, however, the increasing wants and claims of an infant family began from time to time to add strength to the temptations which was more than once thrown in his way of enlarging his means by accepting of further preferment in the church, he persevered in his resolution never to renew his subscription, or publicly declare his assent to articles which he no longer believed to be agreeable to the Scriptures. For some years he conceived that this

was all that was in strictness required, and he did not apprehend that his convictions would carry him further. But repeated and more careful reflection, as it led him to perceive a wider discrepancy between his own views of divine truth and the tenets of his church, and to take a juster view of the connexion between his private convictions and his public duties, at length satisfied him, as it has done most men of honour, integrity, and truly Christian principle, under similar circumstances,—that there was no compromise—no middle path left for him to pursue, in which the opposing claims could be reconciled, on the one hand, of personal and family interest, and what might appear to many a reasonable and proper regard to respectability of station, and important usefulness to his neighbours and the public,—and on the other, of a supreme regard to the paramount obligations of truth and conscience.

In November, 1782, he therefore took at length the decisive step of resigning his preferments, and publicly announced it to the world, with the motives which had led him to it, in a tract, entitled “Reasons for resigning the Rectory of Panton and the Vicarage of Swin-derby, in Lincolnshire, and for quitting the Church of England.” This is a judicious and manly performance, and does great credit both to the head and heart of the writer. It shews that he took this step, not hastily, without due consideration, or in a moment of thoughtless disgust, but as the result of long and painful reflection, which had necessarily led him earnestly and diligently to examine the scriptural

grounds of the disputed doctrines, and also to weigh carefully in the scales, not merely of worldly prudence but of moral duty, the expedients which his friends suggested to ease the conscience of its load. With Dr. Disney's family interest, and the other connexions which he had formed for himself, his prospect of advancement in the church, if he had chosen to aim at it, must have been considerable ; but all this he resigned, at a time when the just claims of an infant family pleaded hard against his conscientious determination, and when he possessed no other independence than the comparatively slender provision of a younger brother. His own relations accordingly, as may be supposed, protested and remonstrated against this step in the strongest terms ; and there is also reason to believe that his difficulties were considerably increased by his being fully aware of the particular offence which it would give to his father-in-law, the Archdeacon of Cleveland ; who, notwithstanding the prominent part he had taken in the controversy on subscription to articles of faith, and the powerful influence which his writings on this subject had exercised in diffusing juster views on this subject, was somewhat inconsistently annoyed when any of his friends shewed a disposition to act on the principles he had given them.

“It has ever been my desire and practice,” our author observes in conclusion, “in the course of my ministry, to explain the great truths of Christianity, and thence to enforce and press upon my hearers the moral duties of the gospel, and the indispensable necessity of

a virtuous and holy life; to remind them that to live soberly, righteously, and piously in this present world, to fear God and keep his commandments, to love our neighbour and assist him by all kind offices, are among the things first needful, and of the greatest importance.

“I make no doubt, that the time will come, when the forms of worship in the liturgy of the church of England will be corrected and reduced nearer to the standard of Scripture. But, alas! this will not be the work of my day. This generation will probably pass away without seeing it. In the mean time, individuals must satisfy themselves in their compliance with the present system, according to their different apprehensions of the truth of it, or seek their relief by a peaceable retirement from a church with which they are not agreed in the object of religious worship. In either of these cases, there is no just occasion given for reproach. The concern is personal, and confined to the conscience of every individual; over which, neither the magistrate nor any private persons, single or associated, have any authority.

“To you, the parishioners of Swinderby, among whom I have lived in entire harmony, and to whom my labours in the ministry have been chiefly devoted,—to you I would say in particular, that I leave you, my honest affectionate neighbours, with regret; but sincerity towards God requires it, and this you will always think right and to be followed. May you remember, and improve by, my late constant endeavours to instruct you according to

the revealed will of God ! I hope you will continue to go forward in the knowledge and obedience of the gospel of Jesus Christ ; framing your lives and conversation by it, as I also will strive to do ; so shall we secure a meeting again in the future everlasting kingdom of God, the Father of all the families of the earth : to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Dr. Disney resigned his livings in November, 1782, and at the commencement of the following year entered on his duties as colleague to Mr. Lindsey, at Essex Street. The following letter to Dr. Toulmin, on this subject, dated Nov. 28, 1782, is inserted in Mr. Belsham's Life of Lindsey, p. 156 : "I must not delay to tell you, lest you should hear of it less directly, that Dr. Disney, who left us last week, was here somewhat more than a fortnight, and during that interval resigned two livings to the Bishop of Lincoln, preached afterwards with great acceptance both parts of the day to our congregation, and the next day was approved as my colleague by as many of the benefactors to our building as were in town. This you will believe has made me very happy. I am the more so, because it was an event unlooked for a few months ago. In the autumn, when I was at his house at Swinderby, I was in treaty with another friend and very eminent person to become my colleague. But I said not a syllable of it to Dr. Disney, for I knew how sore he was, and for six years past have never by letter or in conversation touched the subject of conformity. The Dr. however, having heard by other means that this negociation was at an

end, wrote to me to offer himself, and the result has been as I told you. I have been enabled to allow him something handsome, and some few friends have come forward to enable me, and so I trust every thing will turn out as we wish it. We expect them in January. They have a journey first to make to the good arch-deacon, who thinks that the original sin lies with me in drawing his son-in-law out of the church. But I have told you the truth, and nothing but the truth."

Dr. Disney's first publication after settling in London, was "Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Arthur Ashley Sykes, D.D." This is a well executed and judicious performance, and a good specimen of what the biography of a literary man ought to be; especially of one who took so active and prominent a part as Dr. Sykes did in the most remarkable controversies of the day. It contains a concise, but distinct, and, as far as we have the opportunity to judge, an accurate account of his author's publications. These, which were very numerous, in several instances made a considerable impression, and had a very perceptible influence on the prevailing tone of thought and feeling on theological questions. Dr. Sykes, though an Arian of the school of Clarke, was a clergyman, and had less scruple than his master in the matter of subscription, which he did not hesitate to repeat to the end of his life as often as any additional piece of preferment required it. He pleaded for a certain latitude of interpretation of the formularies of the church, which he alleged was from the first intended and

allowed by the legislature imposing them ; and he was one of the most eminent of that class of the established clergy, highly distinguished for their talents and learning, and at one period not inconsiderable in numbers and influence, who from their advocacy of this principle received the appellation of *latitudinarian* divines. It is not easy to perceive how this notion can be maintained, when the avowed object of the articles is stated to be, "to prevent diversity of opinion ;" and the practical difficulty of applying this principle, and of defining the extent to which the latitude pleaded for may be carried, is sufficient to shew that it is quite inadmissible. "We daily see," says our author (p. 25), "the insufficiency of this project for the purpose for which it is said to be practised. And we all know that uniformity of opinion cannot be obtained by compulsion, or at the requisition of any earthly power. But it is most obvious to see that the *design* of the legislature is otherwise. It is very true that a great variety and diversity of opinions are tolerated and connived at by our governors in church and state ; but such toleration or connivance are not supported or countenanced in the acts or constitutions of either. And it is no small disgrace to our nation, which professes and boasts to be a land of liberty and protestantism, that the free profession of the gospel is not secured by the express declaration and authority of our municipal laws."

On this subject Dr. Sykes had a controversy with the well-known Waterland ; who, as was natural in so warm and zealous a Trinitarian,

exclaimed against "conforming Arians," as manifesting great disingenuousness and want of principle. We cannot but think, that as far as this question was concerned, he had the best of the argument; though, on the other hand, it is equally evident that exactly the same argument was available against himself, when he in his turn did not hesitate as an Arminian to subscribe articles which to all ordinary apprehensions are clearly Calvinistic. Of this rejoinder so practised a controversialist as Dr. Sykes did not fail to take advantage; but it is evident when each disputant, as in this case, brings forward the same considerations to embarrass his opponent, that they amount on either side to nothing more than an *argumentum ad hominem*, and the only conclusion that can be fairly derived from it is, that the two parties ought to unite their strength to procure relief from an imposition which, for different reasons, is, or ought to be, equally oppressive to the consciences of both. Dr. Sykes took great pains to shew that the articles and phrases usually called Trinitarian will *bear* an Arian sense; an assertion which was denied by his antagonist.

The appeals made to various other expressions in the established forms, wherein it was presumed that Dr. Waterland himself made use of reserve or latitude, are in truth, as our author justly observes (p. 123), only so many good arguments against the use of the present, or the policy of the imposition of any subscription whatever.

The following just remarks on the practical benefits resulting from controversy, especially when pursued in a proper spirit, occur at the close of this work :* “ Dr. Sykes’s engagement in the several successive controversies of his time, has attracted the notice of some observers, who on that account have affected to underrate his eminent worth, and no less eminent learning, and the value of his writings. But these persons should consider, that in the accommodation and application of his learning and abilities to the different demands and exigencies of the times, he rendered a very essential and permanent service to the cause of truth and liberty. For, notwithstanding the disrespect which is occasionally shewn towards religious controversy, by little and illiberal minds, it is to such controversies as engaged the pens of Clarke, Hoadly, and Sykes, that we owe much of what is most valuable and dear to us. An affected disparagement of the several controversies which have respected religious liberty and the improved knowledge of the Scriptures, generally indicates an indifference to the nature and obligations of religion itself ; or bespeaks a total ignorance of the blessings we derive and enjoy from free enquiry and debate, by means of the press ; or is the effect of a lamentable prejudice against every desire and attempt to bring all professing Christians to abide by the plain and artless gospel of Christ. Or, when such aversion to controversy is held by well-meaning and more candid minds, it is

* Memoir, &c., p. 364.

no other than their declaring their earnest desire to establish the *end*, while at the same time they inconsistently and peremptorily protest against the only *means* which can effect it."

In 1787, Dr. Disney undertook the mournful but pleasing task of editing a complete collection of the works of his lamented friend Dr. John Jebb, in three volumes, octavo. To this he prefixed a biographical memoir, to which we are chiefly obliged for the materials of the account we have already endeavoured to give of that distinguished person. Of this performance it is enough to say that it is worthy of the writer and the subject; to whom it pays the tribute of admiration and esteem which his eminent talents, high reputation, and truly Christian character so justly deserve. We may add, that the earnest manner in which the writer gives the interesting narrative of his friend's exertions in every good cause, first at the university, and afterwards in the wider sphere of public life, sufficiently proves the cordial interest which he himself took in these great and important objects, and the decided opinion which he formed and avowed on the leading questions which at that period occupied the attention of the public mind.

About the same period the author published a useful tract, which has since been frequently reprinted, entitled "A Friendly Dialogue between a common Unitarian Christian and an Athanasian;" to which is added a second dialogue between the same parties, in which the

latter, having been previously convinced that his former opinions were unscriptural, is led to perceive that his change of sentiment renders it his duty to withdraw from Trinitarian worship. The first dialogue, as stated in the advertisement, is only a reprint, though with considerable alterations. The original author is described as one whose learning, Christian spirit, and temper were deserving of all praise. His name is not mentioned; but in a short memoir, afterwards drawn up by our author and prefixed to a new edition of his most considerable work, it is ascribed to the Rev. W. Hopkins, Vicar of Bolney, a remarkable person, who would have been well entitled to an honourable niche in our temple of fame, if he had only had the strength of mind to take the final step which consistency required, by quitting his station in the church. An interesting anecdote of this gentleman has already been mentioned, p. 19.

In both these pieces, the argument is clearly and forcibly stated, and the dialogue in the main tolerably well supported; but the attentive reader will not fail to perceive that they are liable to the common objection to controversial treatises drawn up in this form, namely, that the opponent is not made to do what a *real* advocate of his cause would allow to be justice to his argument.

We have already seen, that some of those who at this period resigned their livings on embracing Unitarian sentiments, retained unaltered their attachment to the principle of an establish-

ment, and even to the church itself, of which they had been members, in every other point of view than that on account of which they had been compelled unwillingly to withdraw from its communion. This was not the case with Dr. Disney. On the contrary, we find in his later publications repeated proofs that he had not merely rejected the doctrines of the established church, but had embraced in their fullest extent the distinguishing principle of Protestant dissent, which repudiates all connexion or alliance whatsoever between religion and the civil power. Hence he took a warm and active interest in the exertions which were made at this period to procure the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and identified himself on this and all other occasions with the dissenters, although the religious society with which he was more immediately connected could not be properly referred to any of the denominations under which they are usually distributed.

In 1791, Dr. Disney published two sermons; one on the text, "I can of my own self do nothing,"—giving a concise statement of the origin and character of our Saviour's mission, as proceeding from the Father, for the purpose of shewing, that Divine worship offered to a being thus describing himself as derived and dependant, is unscriptural and *idolatrous*. The sermon was probably printed with a view to the discussion at that time pretty actively maintained among the promoters of the newly-formed "Unitarian Society," on the introduction of the word "*idolatrous*" into the preamble of the

Society's rules. There can be no question that if we take this word in its absolute or generally received meaning, it must be applicable to the divine worship of Jesus Christ, in the estimation of those who believe him to be a dependant and created being, however exalted. Still, however, as it has an offensive sound,—as it is thought to convey imputations of a moral nature on those to whom it is applied,—and as the intended meaning might have been expressed without it, the employment of it on this occasion is certainly to be regretted; more especially as it had the effect of needlessly dividing, and therefore weakening, the little band who might have been united in promoting the objects of the Society. The other sermon is a defence of public or social worship, in reply to a pamphlet on this subject, recently published by Mr. Wakefield. The argument is sufficiently well stated; but the form of a direct reply by name to the production of a well-known living writer is somewhat unusual in the pulpit. The preacher had probably his own reasons for believing it to be desirable in this manner to meet the unfavourable impression which may have been made upon some of his hearers.

In 1792, Dr. Disney again appeared in the character which he had already sustained to so much advantage of a biographical writer, by the publication of "Memoirs of the Life and Writings of J. Jortin, D.D." This valuable work is framed, as might be expected, very much on the same plan as the life of Sykes; for there is a close and obvious analogy between the characters of the two men, and in giving

an account of their respective labours and writings, the biographer is naturally led into the same general strain of reflections. They were both distinguished as scholars; though Jortin was better known for his proficiency in polite and classical literature; both belonged to the same school of English divines, and their views on many of the leading points of doctrinal controversy were pretty nearly the same. Sykes was more remarkable for the number and variety of his publications; having been prominently engaged during the whole of his active life in many of the principal discussions which were agitated in his time. They were to all appearance equally free in their religious enquiries, and not very dissimilar in the extent to which they had deviated from the authorized formularies of the church, which they both however subscribed without scruple, whenever circumstances rendered it convenient. On this subject the following judicious remarks by our author, in the preface to this work, shew his candid turn of mind in a very favourable point of view, especially when we consider the sacrifices which he had himself offered at the shrine of religious principle and sincerity.

“ Dr. Jortin, it is apprehended, sensibly felt the want of that liberty which is essential to the profession of genuine Christianity. For though this sentiment is not expressed in the terms of complaint or remonstrance, it may frequently be discovered in incidental observations in many parts of his writings. The difficulties, however, which on this presumption may be supposed to have lain in his way, in

accepting preferment upon the terms which the Church of England requires of her ministers, do not appear to have presented themselves to his mind, with the same force they have done to others. But though this may surprise some persons, and I do not undertake to be his apologist in this matter, nevertheless it is not to be considered as a just cause of indiscriminate reproach. When principles are entertained, in consequence of examination and enquiry, which militate against our own early prejudices and the established practice of our fathers, embarrassments of various kinds impede the adoption of them in their full extent; and it may frequently be observed, that the obligation and consequences of such convictions are found to be a distinct and subsequent consideration, and do not equally affect the different persons concerned in them.

“Be this as it may with respect to our author, it will be sufficient for his readers to benefit by his abilities, his genius, and his learning, from a careful perusal of his writings; and to apply the result of their reading, according as the unprejudiced judgment of each shall direct. Where he affords them light, they will do well to follow it, and to improve it. If Dr. Jortin’s theological opinions were not in perfect conformity with his subscriptions (as others understand the formularies referred to), that was his personal concern, and whether the dogmas of that church of which he was a member are agreeable to the word of God, and consistently required of protestants, it very nearly concerns the state to enquire. As she

hath already interposed her authority, she alone is now competent to correct her own great error; for this most desirable reformation can only be effected by expunging from her laws every statute that presumes to impose upon the consciences of her subjects, or to retrench that liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free."

In 1793, Dr. Disney published two volumes of sermons. In the first volume are preserved in a more permanent form, the single sermons previously printed separately, on which we have already made some remarks. The remainder are, it may be presumed, a favourable specimen of the author's usual style of preaching. They are remarkable, like those of his excellent and venerable colleague, for unambitious plainness and simplicity,—aiming at nothing beyond correctness and perspicuity of language, with an entire absence of all studied ornaments and flights of oratory. Some perhaps will be inclined to call this a defect in the author's pulpit compositions. We have rarely any thing to object to his doctrine, or to the argument by which it is maintained, considered in itself; but when it is recollected that the discourses are addressed to a popular audience, with a view, not merely to *convince* but to *persuade*, we may be apt to think that they would have been more likely to accomplish their purpose, if they had not been so exclusively addressed to the understanding. While, however, the general character of these sermons is what has just been described, it must be observed that it is less remarkable in those which relate to peculiarities of doctrine, or to the assertion of

just principles of religious liberty. Here the style rises to a pitch of animation, and displays a warmth and energy of expression, considerably above the general average. This is no more than we should naturally expect from the author's circumstances and prevailing habits of mind. It should also be observed that the audience to which these discourses were chiefly addressed, probably contained more than the ordinary proportion of persons well accustomed to calm and sober reflection, and not only able but willing to listen to correct reasoning unaided by the charms of rhetoric. Several of the sermons contained in these volumes, delivered on particular occasions, advert to the state of public affairs at the time, and shew that the preacher not only contemplated with deep and lively interest the successive changes and revolutions of that eventful period, but took his side, as might be expected from so warm a lover of civil and religious liberty, among those who formed their expectations according to their wishes, in anticipating an extensive political regeneration from the mighty movement then so powerfully agitating the minds of men.*

Two additional volumes of sermons were pub-

* In a sermon on the conduct of Gallio, the deputy of Achaia, there are some judicious observations on the duty of the civil magistrate in matters of religion. But has it not been somewhat too hastily assumed that the conduct of Gallio on the occasion in question is a model to be recommended? Is it clear that his non-interference arose from an enlightened view of his proper duty in relation to religious disputes, and not rather from a contemptuous indifference? As for the Jews, and the Christians whom he doubtless supposed to be merely a sect of Jews, he probably

lished by the author in 1816, which well maintain the same general character.

In this year (1793), Mr. Lindsey having retired from his public duties on the completion of his seventieth year, Dr. Disney was appointed to the entire charge of the chapel in Essex Street. On this occasion he preached and published a sermon, in which the reciprocal duties of a Christian minister and a Christian congregation are ably explained and applied to the peculiar circumstances of himself and his hearers. He disclaims for himself all the authority which has been too commonly asserted for the minister of the gospel in the supposed character of a priest, and seeks for no other confidence than that which may appear to arise from the intrinsic merit and truly evangelical strain of his instructions. He asserts on behalf of his hearers, and exhorts them to assert for themselves, and consistently to act upon, the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free.

The liturgy used at Essex Street Chapel, was originally printed with slight alterations from Dr. Clarke's amendments of the Common Prayer; and was in fact framed on the principle of deviating no further from the authorized form, than was necessary to adapt it to the

despised them as a contemptible race of people, unworthy of his notice, and would have thought it beneath him to inquire into their obscure tenets or disputes. He therefore leaves them to fight it out as they best may. He cared for none of these things, not even for the lawless violence with which the disappointed people proceeded to vent their rage in his very presence on one of the apostles' adherents (see 1 Cor. i. 1). Surely it is at least the duty of the civil magistrate to keep the peace.

use of Unitarian worshipers. In later editions, as we have already stated, some additional emendations were adopted. But in the year 1802, this corrected Common Prayer was abandoned by Dr. Disney, and another introduced drawn up entirely by himself, without any reference to the service of the church. This new form was acknowledged to be judicious, and, as some thought, in various respects an improvement on the former; but the more modern style of the language, and other circumstances, particularly its wide deviation from the established liturgy, rendered it less acceptable to the congregation at large. On Dr. Disney's retirement, therefore, a few years afterwards, Mr. Lindsey's liturgy was resumed, and is still used.

It must be remembered, that one principal object in the erection of this chapel, was to provide a place of refuge, if we may so express it, for Unitarian churchmen; whose devotional habits and tastes had been formed in a constant attendance on the established worship, and who were consequently unwilling to deviate further from the form they had been accustomed to from their infancy, than the change in their religious opinions and principles rendered unavoidable. If it were not for this consideration, we cannot but think that a majority of unprejudiced, intelligent Unitarians, who should examine the Essex Street Liturgy, with minds free from the bias occasioned by early habit and education in favour of the church service, would wish for a more extensive change; and would gladly be rid of several things in "our

admirable liturgy" which are still retained, and which appear to them to be recommended chiefly by the influence of long usage, and an implicit deference for the authority of the church. They would probably wish for a little more variety than merely that occasioned by the insertion of three additional collects in the morning service on the different Sundays of the month. The Psalms of David, it is true, are not read indiscriminately, straight through, without omitting a single verse, however objectionable, or inappropriate to the circumstances of a Christian congregation; but the mode of reading in alternate verses still practised, and which commonly degenerates into a sort of dialogue between the minister and the clerk, seems very unnatural to one who is not accustomed to it. The order for the administration of the Lord's Supper, to those who have benefited by the variety, interest, and impressiveness which some dissenting ministers are able to give to their exhortations and services on this occasion, appears meagre and unsatisfactory.

Beside the larger biographical works of which we have already given some account, Dr. Disney, at different periods, paid a deserved tribute to the memory of several persons of eminence and merit in shorter memoirs, which in some instances only excite our regret that he was not induced to enter more fully into a subject to which he was so well qualified in every way to do justice. We have this feeling more especially in perusing his "Short Memoirs" of Mr. Dodson, and of Mr. Garnham, both of them

intimate friends, warmly attached to the same great objects, well versed in studies and pursuits akin to his own, and deserving on these and other accounts, of a reputation which it has hardly been their lot to obtain from the public at large.

Dr. Disney's connexion with the chapel at Essex Street continued till the year 1805, when here tired from the public duties of the ministry, and was succeeded by Mr. Belsham; a change well adapted, from the talents and high character of that eminent person, to maintain and promote the prosperity of the congregation,—though it was regretted by some, who would gladly have seen that place occupied by a succession of men, on whom the mantle of its revered founder might have descended, not only in respect to his qualities as a theologian, a minister, and a Christian, but in the peculiar character of a confessor to the truth, who had sacrificed station and prospects in the established church to this high and honourable principle. But though it was sufficiently notorious that not a few remained in the church, whose private sentiments were equally remote from the articles of faith they had subscribed, a new generation seemed to have risen up, who were little disposed to follow the example which had been set them, and were easily satisfied with the plausible but sophistical arguments of some later writers in favour of a course which had so many worldly considerations to recommend it.

About the period of his retirement from Essex Street, Dr. Disney received a very considerable

accession of fortune, at the death of Mr. Thomas Brand Hollis, a member of his congregation, who in consequence of great personal friendship, originating in a high respect for his character and conduct, bequeathed to him his entire estates in Essex and Dorsetshire. Shortly afterwards, in June, 1805, he took up his residence on his newly-acquired property at the Hyde, near Ingatestone, in Essex, where he passed his declining years in an honourable retirement, marked by the unobtrusive discharge of domestic and private duties, but without furnishing many incidents or materials for the biographer. His time was chiefly occupied by literary and agricultural pursuits, but he continued to take a lively interest in every effort made for the promotion of truth, liberty, and virtue; and zealously co-operated with his friend, Mr. Wyvill, in repeated petitions to Parliament, from 1808 to 1813, for the repeal of every law affecting liberty of conscience, on the broad basis of justice and of right.* In 1808 he printed, for private distribution, an elegant memoir of his benefactor Mr. Brand Hollis.

In 1807, was published, under the joint superintendence of Dr. Disney and Mr. Charles Butler, a "New Translation of the Psalms, by the late Dr. Geddes." An advertisement is prefixed, relating to the learned author's labours in biblical criticism and the translation of the Scriptures, which is chiefly remarkable as exhibiting the partnership in a work of this kind, of a Unitarian divine, and a decided,

though candid and liberal Catholic ;—two men, not more widely removed from each other in theological sentiment and connexion, than they were alike in whatever truly constitutes and adorns the Christian character.

In 1812, Dr. Disney published a new edition of “The Great Importance of a Religious Life considered ; to which are added, Morning and Evening Prayers, *revised*.” This well-known practical and devotional tract appeared to him well adapted to its purpose of persuading to the cultivation of religious principles and habits, and supplying means by which that desirable object might be facilitated. At the same time the views of various controverted questions, and the frequent employment of language founded on those views, were such as to unfit the book for the use of Unitarian readers. In order to enable them to participate in the moral benefit to be derived from it, he therefore prepared this revised edition, in which, without injuring the strain of practical piety which pervades the original work, he has removed the doctrinal peculiarities which rendered the book objectionable to readers who regarded these doctrines as gross corruptions of the genuine gospel. In his preface the editor expresses his views in the following frank and ingenuous terms : “In the doctrinal parts of this little work, there were expressions which were supposed not to be supported by Scripture correctly interpreted, and which ill correspond with the sentiments of the present editor and other like-minded Christians. He has therefore omitted these expressions, in compliance with his best

interpretation of his Bible, and in conformity with such different views of our common Christianity, that this work may be unexceptionable to them in doctrine, as it is approved by all on the subject of practice. By this avoidance of *all* obtrusive theology, this work may recommend itself to a numerous and additional body of rational disciples of our common Master.

“The editor is studious to avoid involving the author in any responsibility for the omission of doctrines which were originally adopted by him, or clandestinely ingrafting his own alterations on the labours of another. It is also earnestly hoped that no just cause of offence can be taken by the most tenacious theologian, for the simple omission of occasional language or sentiments thought to be derogatory from the genuine sense of the gospel of Christ, and distant from its true and even tenor.”

This publication was however much exclaimed against by certain persons who denounced it as a specimen of the “insidious practices” which they charged on Unitarians for insinuating their principles under the cover of false and misleading pretences. Perhaps it might have been better if the editor’s name had been given, or the nature and object of his “revision” expressed in the title-page; but certainly no one who looked beyond it could be in any danger of being misled.

In the same year our author “beguiled some hours of pain” by the publication of “Remarks on the Bishop of Lincoln’s Charge on the subject of the Catholic Claims.” This interesting tract is written in a candid, but manly and

independent spirit, and contains a very just and spirited view, not merely of the particular question which suggested it, but of the general principle of a perfect immunity from all civil disabilities on account of religious differences. In particular, he exposes the insufficiency of what is called toleration; a name altogether perverted in its ordinary application; and shews that however gratefully it might be received as a valuable boon when it was first granted, it was only a step in the right direction, which it might have been reasonably expected would in due time have been followed by others, leading at length to a consistent acknowledgment of religious liberty in all its extent.

These tracts were both of them printed at Bath, where the author appears to have spent some time in consequence of the declining and painful state of his health. After experiencing many severe and painful attacks, which he bore with exemplary patience and resignation, he at length sunk under them, on Thursday, December 26, 1816, in the 71st year of his age.

Dr. Disney is justly described by one who knew him well, as an ornament to theological science, an able advocate of Christian truth and liberty, and a generous friend to the cause of humanity.* His learning and talents were of a superior order, and we owe to him several important contributions to the literary and theological history of the last age. Nor can it be considered as mean praise, when it is said of

* See a "Funeral Sermon on the Death of Dr. Disney, by the Rev. T. Jervis."

any man that he was the valued friend, the active and worthy coadjutor, in the cause of truth and liberty, of Cartwright and Wyvill, of Jebb and Lindsey.

Dr. D. was succeeded in his estates by his eldest son John Disney, Esq., of the Hyde. He also left another son Algernon, who entered the army, and a daughter, the relict of the late Rev. Thomas Jervis. To this lady, and to Mr. Disney, the present writer has to express his obligations, for valuable assistance and information in preparing this memoir, as well as for a sight of several of the author's smaller publications which he had not previously met with, and could not have procured elsewhere.

THOMAS FYSHE PALMER

WAS descended from an ancient and respectable family in Bedfordshire; in which county, and in Berkshire, various branches of it still possess considerable property. For the latter county and for the borough of Reading, different members of this family have repeatedly sat in Parliament. The subject of this memoir was born at Northill, in Bedfordshire, in the year 1747. After passing several years at Eton, he was entered at Queen's College, Cambridge, in 1765; where he took the degrees of B.A. in 1769, M.A. in 1772, and B.D. in 1781. With the exception of about twelve months, during which he performed the duties of Curate at Leatherhead, in Surrey, he appears to have spent this portion of his life chiefly at the University; and though his name occurs in the list of the petitioning clergy, we have no other reason for supposing that he entertained any doubts as to the doctrines or discipline of the church, which might affect his mind with scruples on the subject of subscription, previous to taking his last degree. Shortly after this period doubts began to arise on the doctrine of the Trinity, and led him to enquire more carefully. The result was a full conviction of the proper unity of God, and that the worship of the established church was not authorized by Scripture. In 1783 he accordingly withdrew

both from the church and from his college, in which he held a fellowship, and where he had hitherto for the most part resided. Not long afterwards he went to Montrose, in Scotland, to join himself to a small Unitarian society, which had recently been collected in that town by Mr. W. Christie. This gentleman was engaged in trade, but had found time in the intervals of his secular occupations to acquire a competent share of learning, and particularly of such knowledge as served to illustrate the sacred writings, which were the objects of his diligent study.* He was led in consequence to embrace the Unitarian opinions; in the open and avowed profession of which he at that time probably stood almost alone in the land of his birth. He was not afraid, however, to come forward singly in the assertion of what he deemed to be the truth; and on making known his newly-adopted views, with the reasons of them, to his friends and connexions, he was not long in gathering a small band, who assembled for worship at first in a great measure privately, but soon rendered their meetings accessible to the public generally, and constituted the first religious society collected in Scotland whose worship was founded on Unitarian principles.†

* See some interesting particulars relative to this gentleman, extracted from the Preface to his "Dissertations on the unity of God, in the Monthly Repository, O. S. vi. 129, 193.

† To this small society Mr. Christie addressed a series of Discourses on the Divine Unity, which were printed in 1784, in one vol. 8vo. This is a valuable and learned work, which shews the author to have been well versed in theological studies, and a complete master of the Unitarian controversy. It was well received, and procured him the

For some time Mr. Christie conducted, without assistance, the religious services of the con-

friendship and correspondence of the most eminent Unitarian writers of the age. An enlarged and improved edition of the Discourses was printed in 1790, and it has since been more than once reprinted.

In 1794, Mr. Christie removed from Montrose to Glasgow, where he took charge of the Unitarian congregation which then existed in that city, and had previously benefited by the services of the late worthy and excellent Dr. Spencer, afterwards a physician in Bristol. Here he composed another work, entitled "Dissertations on the Unity of God, &c." In the course of the following year, however, he emigrated to America; a step to which he was induced partly by private embarrassments, and partly by the threatening aspect of public affairs, which, after what had happened to many of his friends, might well lead him to entertain reasonable apprehensions for his own security. After various troubles and vicissitudes, he settled for some years at Winchester, in Virginia; where he was for some time connected with an academical institution in that place, and afterwards set up a private school, on which however he could not subsist, owing in a great measure to the prevailing prejudice against his religious opinions. In 1801 he removed to Northumberland; where he soon afterwards began to preach, not altogether, as it would seem, without acceptance and success. He is frequently mentioned in his letters from that place by Dr. Priestley, who describes him as a popular preacher, and speaks with deserved respect of his character and talents. Mr. Christie pronounced a funeral oration over the grave of Dr. Priestley, which was published. He also wrote the general review of Dr. Priestley's theological works, which forms part of the Appendix to his Memoirs.

In 1807, Mr. C. settled at Philadelphia; but did not join himself to either of the Unitarian societies then existing in that city, further than by the delivery of the above-mentioned Dissertations, which were shortly afterwards printed. From that time to his death, in November, 1823, he appears to have lived for the most part in a tranquil undisturbed retirement. "Few men," says the writer of his obituary, in the Monthly Repository, xix. 363, "have possessed the talent of expressing themselves with greater clearness and strength of language than Mr. Christie, and, what was not a little remarkable, his memory did not appear to be impaired in his latter years. It was faithful,

gregation; a task for which his attainments and general character abundantly qualified him. But in July, 1783, he was agreeably surprised to receive the following letter from Mr. Palmer, then an entire stranger to him.

“Queen’s Coll. Cambridge,

“July 14, 1783.

“Dear Sir,

“A new publication by Mr. Lindsey, entitled ‘The History of the Unitarians since the Reformation, which he was so obliging as to send me the other day, first made me happy with the intelligence of the Unitarian society at Montrose, and with your name. Indeed I was seldom if ever more affected with joy and gratitude to the Great Being, for having vouchsafed to extend the knowledge of himself so far. As a partaker of your joy, and fellow-worshiper of Him, you will allow me to give you the reasons why I trouble you with this.

“I must begin with telling you, that I am, to my sorrow, a clergyman of the Church of England. But as I consider her liturgy corrupt and antichristian, and her articles to be not

even as regarded the most minute particulars. No man could be more inflexible in his adherence to the cause of truth, and to the principles of integrity, as applicable to the duties of social life. It was much to be lamented that his habits were so much those of a recluse; but it was easily to be perceived by those who knew him, that he was by no means wanting in many of the best qualities of the heart. A Christian from principle and conviction, he was in the habit of acknowledging God in all his ways, and of referring all his concerns to the Divine disposal; thus, notwithstanding many severe trials and reverses, he always maintained that the ways of Heaven were just, and wise, and good.”

only an injurious violation of the liberty where-with God and Christ have made me free, but a jumble of absurdity and impiety, I have declined the acceptance of all preferment at the dear price of swearing these to be true and agreeable to Scripture, which I believe to contain so many gross and shocking falsehoods. With such opposite sentiments, how can I ever unite with her? I am persuaded she is very erroneous in many points, but in none more than in the object of her worship. I profess myself a zealous worshiper of the only true God, whom *only* to serve, my Teacher and Master said was the first and greatest of all commandments. Convinced as I am, both by reason and revelation, of this most important of all known truths, I dare not,—it would be idolatry in me to join in the church's service of three gods, and her litany service of four gods. For these reasons I have quitted all connexion as much as possible with her. But being a member of this university, and Fellow of a College, I feel the force of decency and decorum obliging me to attend the daily service of the chapel; while a much more powerful motive obliges me never to go. Yet this is a kind of halting between two opinions; it is unmanly, it is unbecoming him who is not ashamed of his God, but who thinks it his highest privilege, honour, and happiness, to be permitted to be his lowliest servant, and to express himself so openly.

“Pressed by these difficulties, and others of a like kind, which it is not necessary to mention, I thought Montrose might be an asylum

to me for a year or two, till I had gotten information enough in that book (meaning the Bible) to dispense it to others;—where in the mean time I could worship the Father of mercies according to my conscience, could enjoy the union of brother Christians, and might possibly build and be built up by them.”

Mr. P. speaks afterwards of private concerns, and concludes in the following manner:

“May the Father of mercies smile upon your little society; may it be the nursing mother to the whole kingdom, to bring it back to the long-lost truth—the worship of *only Him*. May every spiritual and every temporal blessing fitting in the eye of Infinite Benevolence be your portion, is the hearty prayer of,

“Sir,

“Your most obedient humble servant,

“THOMAS FYSHE PALMER.”*

We have inserted this letter at length, both on account of its remarkable character, and because it furnishes the most authentic statement we have been able to find, of Mr. Palmer's views and sentiments immediately previous to his taking the important and decisive step of quitting his station in the church and University. It led of course to a correspondence, the result of which was that Mr. Palmer, after having formally released himself from the connexion which he now felt to be a bondage, repaired to Montrose in the ensuing December, and for some time assisted Mr. Christie in the charge of his small congregation at that place. But he was doubtless chiefly occupied, as he

* Monthly Repository, vi. 135.

proposed to himself, in the private and diligent study of that sacred book, to which he now looked as his only guide and authority, and in which perhaps, till now, he had not been able to search out the truth with a mind perfectly free from the bias and prejudice arising from early education and connexions.

In the Autumn of 1785, Mr. Palmer removed to Dundee, where his zeal and ability soon enabled him to raise a congregation. Here he continued to reside for nearly eight years; making however frequent visits to Montrose and other places; in the course of which he was instrumental in gathering together several other communities of Unitarian worshipers, particularly at Glasgow, Edinburgh, Arbroath, Forfar, and Newburgh. Most of these were doubtless on a small scale, consisting perhaps of a few families in each place, whom he induced to unite in acting according to their convictions, in reliance upon the encouraging assurance of him who said, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I present in the midst of them."

In 1788, Mr. Palmer spent a few months at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he preached to a small Congregation of Unitarian Baptists, who then assembled in a distinct place of worship, but have now been for many years united with the society meeting at Hanover Square, in that town. He was followed and admired as a preacher, and his society was sought for by members of both congregations, as that of a scholar and a gentleman; independently of the interest naturally inspired by his remarkable

history. It is said, however, that there was something eccentric in his manner, and that both in conversation and in the pulpit, he was now and then apt to startle his hearers by the use of strong and unusual expressions. In 1792 he resided for some time at Edinburgh, where his preaching attracted much attention from various persons of literary and professional eminence in that city.

Mr. Palmer's publications were but few, and of small extent. The most considerable were some papers inserted in the *Theological Repository*, under the signature of *Anglo-Scotus*; which exhibit his skill as a *Scripture Critic*, and his talents for theological investigation in general, in a very favourable point of view. And we cannot but regret that his contributions to this important department of literature were so few and limited. But his time and labour at this period were mainly devoted to another object, in his estimation of still greater importance,—deeply engaged as he was in promoting the profession and practical application of rational religion, in a country where its principles were as yet very imperfectly understood. This occupied his chief attention, and left him little leisure for the speculations even of theological learning.

In one of these papers he attempts to shew that by the 'fallen angels' (2 Peter ii. 4, and Jude 6) were meant the sons of Seth, spoken of Gen. vi. 2, as coming down and taking to themselves wives from among the daughters of men. They were called by the name of *Jehovah* (Gen. iv. 26), or sons of God, (expressions

which he considers as equivalent) to distinguish them from the 'sons of men', the descendants of Cain, who had wandered from the habitation and worship of the Most High. The expression 'sons of God' is translated 'angels' by the Septuagint in Job. ii. 1, and a similar reading occurs in some MSS. in this place. "When the sons of Seth left the place where the divine glory manifested itself, and went after the fair daughters of men, they were taught by them to apostatize from the Great Being, and worship the elements and stars. Idolatry brought with it its constant concomitant, depravation of manners; and when the salt of the antediluvian world, the children of Seth, became idolatrous, the whole earth was corrupt, and all flesh had then corrupted its way before God."*

In another paper on Isaiah ix. 6, the author remarks, that the word translated "shall be called," is in the active form in the original, and he proposes accordingly to translate the whole verse thus: "Unto us a child is born, &c., and the wondrous Jehovah, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of futurity, shall call his name, (that is, the child's name) the Prince of Peace." In a paper on the prophecies, contained in the 24th chapter of Matthew, he takes pains to shew (in conformity with the suggestions of Mr. Taylor, the ingenious author of the letters of Ben Mordecai) that the disciples proposed *two* distinct questions together, "Tell us when will these things be, *and* what shall be the sign of thy coming?"

* Th. Repository, v. 180.

The confusion of which most readers are sensible in what follows, has been occasioned, he thinks, by our Lord's courtesy in answering both these questions together, so that the transition from the one to the other is not accurately observed, or distinctly marked in the report of his discourse. The other papers shew considerable ingenuity and research, as well as originality of speculation, but relate chiefly to various minor points of theological enquiry, of which it would be difficult to give a more particular analysis.

In 1792, Mr. Palmer published "An Attempt to refute a Sermon by H. D. Inglis, on the Godhead of Jesus Christ, and to restore the long-lost truth of the first commandment." "This Pamphlet," says Mr. Christie,* "is written with much ease and vivacity, and some strong argument, and is a picture of Mr. Palmer's free and unconstrained manner of explaining his sentiments." In a prefatory address to the Unitarian congregations of Edinburgh, Dundee, Forfar, Arbroath, and Newburgh, we find the following just and impressive valedictory remarks. "If active zeal can spread the abasing and idolatrous superstition of a popular sect, what success must attend equal exertions in a rational service of the Deity; which, issuing from him, will be found every way worthy of him, and has all that can captivate our reason, and warm and amend the heart. Let us not be slothful then, brethren, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, always

* M. Rep. vi. 137.

abounding in his work, forasmuch as we know that our labour will not be in vain. But while we are filled with zeal, let us, at the same time, be filled with equal charity; while we endeavour to root out the error, let us love the erroneous; remembering that universal love, without the distinction of sect or party, and undissembled active benevolence, are the mark and criterion of being the disciples of him who laid down his life for those that rejected his doctrine. Thus by our reverence and attachment to the Almighty, and by our love to our brethren of mankind, may we adorn his gospel, and cause many to glorify our Father; that so we may be filled with the unspeakable consolation of his being our great and everlasting reward.

“Farewell, my dear brethren: bound to you by a love which nothing but the gospel can inspire, I am your affectionate brother in Christ,
“T. F. PALMER.”

By the exertions of Mr. Palmer on behalf of the cause which he had so warmly espoused, aided by the zealous and active co-operation of Mr. Christie, of Montrose, and Mr. Robert Millar, of Dundee, a very considerable impression seemed to be produced in Scotland in favour of Unitarianism. His preaching was powerful and effective, and his zeal in support of what appeared to him to be Christian truth, was ardent, sincere, and disinterested. For not only had he given up, by his separation from the church, a present distinguished and honourable station with flattering worldly prospects, but he devoted ten years of his life to the pro-

pagation, in a land of strangers, of an unpopular doctrine, everywhere spoken against, without salary or pecuniary reward of any kind. In short he seemed destined to become the apostle of Unitarianism in Scotland. But the scene was shortly about to change. These encouraging prospects were, for the time at least, lamentably blighted; and though we cannot doubt that much of the good seed remained in the ground, ready to spring up under more favourable auspices, the original labourer was unhappily driven from the field, and for a series of years it might have been thought that almost all the fruits of his toil had vanished away.

The general excitement created by the first outbreak of the French revolution spread in all its ardour to Scotland, both among the friends and foes of political regeneration; and the vehemence and exasperation of party spirit were carried to an almost unexampled pitch. Mr. Palmer, as might be naturally presumed from his earnestness of mind, his zeal for what he deemed religious truth, and his habit of contending against the powers which seemed to bear sway in the world, was ardently and devotedly interested on behalf of the rising spirit of liberty; and he doubtless expressed himself on this and on every other subject in which he felt a deep interest, warmly and strongly; so much so as occasionally to excite an apprehension in his friends lest some indiscretion should afford a plausible handle for silencing the obnoxious missionary of an unpopular mode of faith. But it does not appear that he took at first any very active or prominent part in the

councils of those who had made themselves conspicuous by their animated, and, it must be admitted, occasionally intemperate and most injudicious proceedings. His labours to reform existing opinions and institutions in another direction, were enough to occupy the whole of his time and attention. But these rendered him at least as much an object of jealousy to the ruling powers and prevailing parties, as if he had been most deeply engaged in political agitations; and hence, when he at length unfortunately suffered himself to be involved in transactions of this kind, though in the slightest and most incidental manner, the opportunity was eagerly laid hold of by those who sought but too successfully to accomplish his ruin.

A small and very obscure society of persons, calling themselves "friends of the people," had been formed in Dundee. On one occasion when Mr. Palmer was accidentally induced to attend a meeting of this society, he found them engaged in discussing an address to their fellow-citizens, written by an unlettered weaver, who afterwards, when summoned as a witness, publicly acknowledged it as his own. This address the society were desirous to publish. Mr. Palmer, though he approved of the sentiments and general purport of the paper, objected to the publication as unnecessary and imprudent; and thought some of the expressions too harsh and violent. At length, however, after much discussion, he was unfortunately prevailed on, not only to revise and amend the address, but, after having softened some of the more exceptionable passages, to take charge of its publi-

cation in the form of a hand-bill. This production,—but for its consequences, utterly trivial and insignificant,—expresses in strong terms certainly, decided opinions on various political questions with respect to which men have a right to differ; but, when compared as an instrument of “agitation” with the manifestoes issued in our times by the Chartists, or even by the Anti-Corn-Law League, it sinks down into a perfect pattern of temperance and moderation. And there can be no doubt that it would have been passed by without further notice, for it would have attracted none, if it had not been traced home to Mr. Palmer, and so afforded a promising opportunity for getting rid of a preacher of heresy and schism, by bringing him, as a mover of sedition, into collision with the law, as interpreted and administered by violent alarmists and unscrupulous political partizans.

Under such auspices, Mr. Palmer was apprehended and brought to trial, at Perth, in Sept. 1793. The ordinary procedure of the Scottish criminal courts is apt to appear to an English spectator harsh and severe in its treatment of the prisoner; shewing too little regard to the humane maxim of our law, that it is better that ten guilty should escape, than that one innocent man should suffer. But on this occasion the judges, instead of maintaining the impartiality of the bench, assumed rather the office of public prosecutors, dwelling upon and enforcing those parts of the evidence which made against the prisoner, and aggravating the offence in order to afford them a justification for inflicting the severest punishment.

Reference having been made repeatedly in the course of the trial to Mr. Palmer's religious peculiarities (though this ought to have been checked by the bench, as irrelevant to the matter in hand), all that his advocate, Mr. Clerk, ventures to offer on the subject, is to suggest that so much extravagance reigned in his mind on these topics, as to prevent his being considered as altogether a rational person, and therefore some allowance must be made for his aberrations in other respects. On a perusal of the published report of the trial, we cannot but think that he was not as well served by his counsel as might have been expected; and the written defence he had prepared for himself would seem to have been better fitted to answer the purpose, if there had not been such an open undisguised partiality in the judges, as made it evident that they were determined at all events to procure a conviction. In this paper, he enters at length into an analysis and vindication of the address itself; and after claiming some portion of the indulgence fairly due to the production of an uneducated writer, in whom strict logical accuracy of expression was not always to be expected, he urges that it is one thing to find fault with the constitution, and quite another to find fault with the administration of it. The former had not been done by the writer of the address,—the latter was done every day, and had been done many times, both in and out of parliament, in language infinitely stronger and more impassioned.

The jury having brought in a verdict of guilty against Palmer, the judges proceeded to sen-

tence him to seven years' transportation; on which he addressed the court in the following terms:

“My Lords,—I can appeal with conscious sincerity to the Great Searcher of hearts, for the good intentions and uprightness of my conduct. My life has for many years been employed in the dissemination of what I conceived to be religious and moral truths; truths which I supposed to be of the greatest importance to mankind. My friends know with what ardour I have done this, at the total sacrifice of all my worldly interests; but during the late great political discussions, it was entirely, naturally impossible, in a man of my sanguine disposition, to remain an unconcerned bystander. I felt as all around me felt; I caught the general influence. I thought too, that I perceived that politics were a great branch of morals, if they did not comprise the whole of our duty to our neighbour; for, my Lords, would but our superiors, would but all the world do to one another what they in like circumstances would wish to be done to themselves, our petitions would have been answered and every grievance redressed.

“It is not, my Lords, the first time that I have suffered in endeavouring to benefit others;—for this I have borne shame, odium, reproach, and a great diminution of fortune. I hope and trust, that it is my utmost ambition, and all who know me will agree with me, that it has been the tenor of my life, to endeavour to add if possible, to the sum of human happiness. And, my Lords, if I should be called again to

suffer, in what I cannot but think the cause of men in general—the cause of human happiness, I trust, that I shall be able to bear my sufferings, not only with fortitude, but with cheerfulness; with the hope, my Lords, that my sufferings will not be wholly lost, but will, by the blessing of that great Being whom I serve, be rendered efficacious to the good of my fellow-creatures.”*

Between the passing and the execution of his severe sentence, Mr. Palmer was for some time subjected to very rigorous treatment. He was closely confined for some weeks in the common gaol at Perth, where however he was visited by several Christian comforters; among whom was his attached friend and coadjutor, Mr. Robert Millar of Dundee; also a gentleman of the name of Melliss, at that time a merchant in high credit at Perth, but who suffered great losses from the part he took in political affairs.† In the month of November, he was suddenly and without notice removed, at four in the morning, on board a cutter, which conveyed him to London; where he and Mr. Muir, a gentleman of the Scottish bar, who for a somewhat similar offence had been subjected to a still severer sentence, were lodged for some time in Newgate. They were afterwards conveyed on board of the hulks at Woolwich, provided for the reception of convicts destined for transportation. Here they were treated by the governor with as much

* Trial of Mr. Palmer, p. 160.

† See a Memoir of Mr. Palmer, by Mr. Mardon, *Chr. Reformer*, iv. 338.

consideration and humanity, as their situation along with a multitude of criminals, sentenced for every species of offence to the same destination, admitted. Many friends were permitted to visit them, who sympathized in their fate, and exerted themselves to alleviate their distresses as much as possible. Among these were Dr. Priestley, Mr. Lindsey, Dr. Disney, and others warmly attached to the cause of civil liberty as well as of religious truth, for both of which Mr. Palmer was called upon, as they deemed it, to suffer wrongfully. A subscription was raised for his benefit, and that of Mr. Muir, in which several other fellow-sufferers were allowed to participate,—not all of them, unfortunately, equally deserving of such a distinction.*

The legality of the sentence was so strongly questioned by several distinguished Scotch lawyers, the term in the Scotch statute being not transportation, but simple banishment, *forth of Scotland*, that a strong expectation was entertained by some, that it would not be finally put in execution. This expectation however proved groundless; and so bent were the government on forcing its victims to drain the bitter cup to the dregs, that while the question of legality was still under discussion in Parliament, Mr. Palmer and his associates were hurried on board of the *Surprise*, a transport employed in the convict service, and dispatched to Botany Bay, in the midst of a crowd of various descriptions of criminals.

* Belsham's Memoirs of Lindsey, p. 352.

While on board the Stanislaus hulk at Woolwich, he received an affectionate address from his late congregation at Dundee.* They were strongly attached to him for his active, able, and disinterested services, and deeply lamented the cruel separation which deprived them of this much valued privilege. "We mourn," say they, "your absence; but while we have no doubt of being remembered by you in your prayers, you shall not be forgotten in ours. In the mean time we most fervently pray, that the God and Father of all, whose mercies are not confined to prosperous situations, may impart to you divine consolations, that if your heart and flesh should at any time be apt to fail, He may be your never-failing support, and that you may be enabled ever to exercise such a lively faith in Him, and in the gospel of his Son, as with truly pious ardour to anticipate that future inconceivable joy which assuredly shall be the portion of those who have come out of great tribulation." We are persuaded that this affectionate prayer on his behalf was heard and answered. At all events, such expressions of attachment and sympathy from those who knew him best, and from others whom he had long esteemed and honoured as the excellent of the earth, could not fail to be a soothing consolation and powerful support to Mr. Palmer in this hour of severe trial. But he sought for a still higher and more effectual support in conscious integrity,—in a zeal without abatement for

* Obituary of Mr. Palmer, M. Magazine, Feb. 1804.

religious truth, and for whatever tends to promote the best interests of mankind,—and the approbation of Him whom he had endeavoured to serve, in comparison with which he felt that it was a small thing to be condemned by human judges. This consolation never failed him; and in the darkest season he retained a dignified patience, and even his habitual cheerfulness, in the midst of his adversity.

The Surprise took its final departure from Portsmouth in the beginning of May, 1794. The treatment which the sufferers experienced during the voyage was exceedingly harsh and tyrannical. Considerable discontent seems to have arisen among the convicts generally, which the captain ascribed, or pretended to ascribe, to Mr. Palmer and Mr. Skirving, one of his companions in adversity. He even charged them with an attempt to excite a mutiny, and with endeavouring to hire some persons to murder the principal officers, that they might take possession of the ship. In consequence of this absurd and incredible accusation, they were placed under close restraint, and treated with a species of wanton oppression and cruelty, which might seem to have been dictated by a deliberate intention that they should not survive the voyage. In Mr. Palmer's case it is probable that this result would have been realized, but for the unceasing kindness and attention of James Ellis, a young man who, from personal affection and sympathy, had volunteered his services, and accompanied him to the colony as a free settler. "I believe," says he, in a letter to Mr. Lindsey, "I should

have fallen before my inhuman tyrant, had it not been for the courageous and active friendship of James Ellis and Mr. Boston (the young man I wrote to you about) and his wife. They were threatened with irons, even Mrs. Boston; and when Mr. Boston landed, C. (the captain) blasted all his prospects, by accusing him of Jacobinism and drinking destruction to the K——. This last was proved to be an infamous falsehood. They gave another signal proof of their friendship. Somehow or other their knowledge of the arts was spread abroad at Rio de Janeiro, and the viceroy paid them every attention, kept a splendid table for them, had a man of rank to attend them, set them to work, and when convinced of their ability, offered them any sum to set up in business, and £300 per annum each to settle at Rio. They firmly rejected the offer (though both were without a shilling); as it was their firm belief that C. would have murdered me in their absence. After such kindness, it followed of course that we lived together, and that they shared what I had.”* What this amounted to, we have not the means of ascertaining; we cannot suppose it to have been very considerable, though his connexion with an opulent family would doubtless secure Mr. Palmer from the apprehension of absolute want. But his own losses were far from trivial; among the rest, he was held by his conviction to have forfeited his fellowship, which as he was never married, he had retained till this time.

* Belsham's Memoir of Lindsey, p. 523.

Mr. Palmer carried out with him recommendations from persons of the first respectability, which secured him as mild and favourable a treatment as the constitution of a penal settlement would admit of; and he passed the tedious years of his remote exile in tranquillity. Though exposed to many hardships, he was generally esteemed by all the respectable part of that singularly-constituted community. After a time, he took a farm, while his companions engaged in the manufacture of various articles of consumption for the use of the colony. By the help of such information as they obtained from a copy of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which had been presented to him by some friends before leaving England, they managed to build and navigate for themselves a small vessel, in which they traded to Norfolk Island. This they did for some time with tolerable success, as far as they were permitted by the jealousy of those who, "drest in a little brief authority," sought to turn the accident of their position to their own private advantage, by engrossing all profitable traffic to themselves. Mr. Palmer's letters to various friends, written during his residence at Sydney, give a lamentable account of the abuses and misgovernment through which that now prosperous colony had to struggle in its infancy.

According to the terms of the sentence, it was death for Mr. P. to be found on British ground previous to September, 1800: however, as the voyage would necessarily occupy several months, he and his friends (Ellis, Boston, and some others) began to prepare for their return

towards the end of 1799. They purchased a small vessel, in which they set sail for New Zealand, for the purpose of taking from thence a cargo of timber, to dispose of at the Cape of Good Hope. Unfortunately the ship was in a wretched, crazy condition; and having been detained at New Zealand much longer than they expected, their stock of provisions and other stores was nearly exhausted, so that they were compelled to change their course, and proceed to the Friendly Islands in search of a fresh supply. Here, however, they were disappointed, in consequence of a war which they found raging among the natives. At the Feejee Islands they were more fortunate; and not only procured the supplies of provisions of which they were in need, but were assisted by the natives in repairing the damage which their miserable vessel had sustained. From hence they sailed for Macao, but before they could reach their destination, they were again reduced to great straits, and were compelled to put in at Guam, one of the Ladrone Islands, where was a Spanish settlement, and which they well knew to be a hostile port. On coming to anchor (January 10, 1801), the Spanish governor, in reply to their solicitations for provisions, assured them that unless they departed in two hours, he would detain them as prisoners of war, for to the enemies of his country he could give no support whatever. Necessity obliged them to submit to the hard terms offered them. They were immediately taken prisoners, and a guard put into their ship. In other respects, though detained in this remote

island, they appear to have been not ill-treated. At length, after a detention of more than a year, Mr. Palmer was seized with a dysentery, a disease with which he had been frequently afflicted since he left England; and after lingering for some time, finally sunk under it, on the second of June, 1802. His effects and papers he bequeathed to his faithful friend, Mr. James Ellis; who afterwards settled at Manilla, and, in company with Mr. Boston, carried on a large distillery at that place.

Thus, remote from friends, in an obscure foreign settlement on the other side of the globe, perished one who was amply endowed by nature and education with those gifts which might fit him for rendering eminent service to the best interests of mankind. The services he had already rendered to the cause of truth were far from inconsiderable; though for a time they might seem to have been in a great measure counteracted by the opposition of the prejudiced and ill-disposed. "On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues," ready to spread the injurious reports of sectarian bigotry and political animosity, he was nevertheless happily instrumental in sowing the good seed, which we trust will grow and prosper, and bring forth good fruit in increasing abundance from age to age.

Of the small Unitarian societies in Scotland which owed their temporary existence to Mr. Palmer's exertions, scarcely any survived the shock arising from the circumstances attendant on his removal from that country. That of Montrose does not seem to have met as a reli-

gious community after Mr. Christie quitted the place. Of those which had been formed at Edinburgh and Glasgow, no apparent traces were visible a few years afterwards, though several of the individual members have since joined themselves to the more numerous and flourishing Unitarian congregations now established in those cities. Only at Dundee was a continuous existence maintained through the whole intervening period. This was mainly due to the meritorious exertions of Mr. Robert Millar, who persevered amidst evil report and good report, under much difficulty and discouragement, uncheered by a single fellow-labourer in the cause throughout all the length and breadth of the land. For some years the successor of Mr. Palmer was liable to danger as well as to opposition and calumny (for every letter he received was previously opened by the agents of government), but he remained unshaken in his public avowal and profession of the faith everywhere spoken against. In this honourable course he was supported by the frequent correspondence of Mr. Lindsey, and other distinguished and active friends of the same cause at a distance. In early life, Mr. Millar was a prosperous merchant, and at one time had realized a competent independence; but in this respect also he was destined to experience vicissitude and change. He died nevertheless, full not only of years, but of honour, in June, 1841.*

* See an interesting memoir of this excellent person in the *Christian Pioneer*, Aug. 1841.

GILBERT WAKEFIELD

Was born at Nottingham, Feb. 22, 1756. His father, the Rev. George Wakefield, was then rector of the parish of St. Nicholas in that town ; but afterwards removed to the vicarage of Kingston-upon-Thames, with the chapelry of Richmond annexed. He appears to have been a man above mediocrity both in talents and general respectability of character ; but was contented to pass through life in the quiet and unobtrusive discharge of humble and unnoticed, though important duties, without courting the public attention, or seeking for the praise of men. Gilbert was noted from an early age for uncommon quickness of talent, and especially for a remarkably retentive memory, which greatly facilitated those philological acquisitions for the extent and variety of which he was afterwards so distinguished, and which he pursued through life with extraordinary ardour and success, notwithstanding many disadvantages, and amidst a multitude of distracting avocations. It would appear, however, from his own very interesting and curious autobiography, that he was but little indebted to the various classical teachers under whose tuition he was placed in early life, until he at length became a pupil of the Rev. R. Wooddeson, Master of the Free Grammar School of Kingston. From hence,

in April, 1772, he removed to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he engaged with great ardour and assiduity both in classical and mathematical studies, and having taken his degree of B. A., with the rank of second wrangler, was elected a fellow of his college in 1776. In this year he also made his first public appearance as a scholar, by the publication of a small collection of Latin Poems, partly original, partly translations, with a few notes on Horace by way of appendix.

At this period, as the reader of the preceding articles is aware, the question of subscription to articles of faith was the subject of warm and animated discussion, and several of the most distinguished advocates of the cause of freedom and liberality were resident members of the university. Among these, Tyrwhitt and Jebb honoured the young but promising undergraduate with their friendship. Mr. Wakefield was as independent as any man, and no undue or unworthy motive was likely to bias his judgment; at the same time it may be fairly presumed, that at this early period the character of his mind would be sensibly influenced by such associates, and would be determined to follow their example in seeking for truth, especially divine truth, by a diligent and impartial use of the lights afforded him for that purpose, without regard to that human authority, which, allowing itself to be fallible, nevertheless claimed implicit deference and unexamining assent. During two years that he resided at Cambridge, after taking his degree, he continued, he tells us, his classical and theological studies in con-

junction, with unabated vigour; endeavouring to obtain a complete mastery of the original languages of the Scriptures, and from thence, as from the fountain head, to draw his conclusions. His views of Scripture truth, resulting from this method of investigation, were already so far removed from the standards of the church, that he represents the act of subscription attendant on his entering into orders, as the most disingenuous action of his life,—an act which no consideration on earth would induce him to repeat.

In the following year, his resolution on this point was put to the proof, when having become a candidate for the mastership of Brewood School in Staffordshire, on the understanding that subscription was not required, he resigned his pretensions without hesitation, on finding that he had been misinformed, though the object was to all appearance within his grasp. It is, however, somewhat remarkable, that at the time when his scruples carried him so far on the point of subscription, he had no difficulty in accepting three curacies in succession,—one at Stockport, and two afterwards at Liverpool, the duties of which of course required him statedly to conform to the public service of the church, in those parts which must already have appeared to him most objectionable. He himself mentions these facts in his own memoirs, without saying by what method of reasoning he got over these difficulties; though he acknowledges in one place, that his clerical functions had become exceedingly irksome to his feelings.

During the short period of his connexion

with the church (not much more than twelve months in all), Mr. Wakefield's attention to his official duties seems to have been highly exemplary, and his ability and acceptance as a preacher very considerable; so that when, near the close of his residence at Liverpool, a vacancy occurred by the death of the incumbent of one of the churches, there was good reason to believe that he might have procured the appointment, if he had not already determined on another and very different course. "His manner of performing the public services of the church," says one who knew him at this period,* "was not only altogether exempt from every irreverence, both of carelessness and affectation, but likewise possessed a seriousness that indicated his impression of the great moment to mankind of every thing relating to religion, and engaged universal approbation. His delivery of his discourses, in particular, was with a voice distinctly audible, as well as mild and conciliating, and an address animated and impressive; all which, in concurrence with the solemnity and simplicity blended in his aspect, rivetted in an uncommon degree the attention of his hearers, and failed not uniformly to obtain their warmest encomium."

In March, 1779, Mr. Wakefield married the daughter of Joseph Watson, Esq., of Pott Shrigley, near Lyme, in Cheshire, with whom he passed the remainder of his life in the enjoyment of much domestic happiness. Mr. Watson having died at the early age of thirty, Mrs. W. and her sister were placed under the

* Memoir of Gilbert Wakefield. 2nd edit. vol. i. p. 199.

care of their uncle, the Rev. John Watson, rector of Stockport, when Mr. Wakefield entered on his first curacy at that place. Mrs. Wakefield died, Feb. 6, 1819.

In the summer of 1779, Mr. Wakefield resigned his curacy, and shortly afterwards removed to Warrington, to undertake the department of classical tutor in the Dissenting Academy at that place. Here he remained for nearly four years, till the dissolution of that establishment in 1783. At Warrington, as afterwards at Hackney, his lectures were much valued by his pupils, whose regard and attachment he conciliated in a high degree. His observations on the classical writers, whom he read with them, were delivered for the most part in a free and familiar style; consisting in a great measure of verbal criticism, illustrated (as was his frequent habit in the contributions to theological and literary criticism which he afterwards gave to the public) in the production of a great variety of passages where the same word is used by other authors. In the session of 1781, after the lamented death of Dr. Aikin, Mr. Wakefield voluntarily undertook a course of lectures on the New Testament.

At Warrington he commenced his career as a theological writer, by the publication, in 1781, of a new translation of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians; offered to the public as a specimen of an intended version of the whole New Testament. This was favourably received, but the more extended plan, though ultimately carried into effect, seems to have been for some time laid aside. It was however followed in

the succeeding year by "A Translation of the Gospel of Matthew, with copious Notes, critical, philological, and explanatory," in one volume, quarto. This is a work which displays the ability, the diligence, and the learning of the author, in a very favourable point of view; and exhibits also an extent and variety both of classical and theological reading, which cannot but appear very extraordinary in a writer who had as yet scarcely numbered twenty-six years. It may be added, that it is not less remarkable for the zealous, decided, and uncompromising dogmatism with which the writer contends for many of the obnoxious and unpopular tenets which by this time he had fully embraced. In the note on chap. i. 18, the doctrine of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit is attacked with great ability and force of reasoning. The same character may be given of the notes on the temptation, where the author adopts and ably defends the hypothesis of Farmer on this subject. In private society, Mr. Wakefield was remarkable for gentle and amiable manners, which were the true index to his mind, and deservedly endeared him to all who had the privilege of his personal acquaintance; but his writings did not always correspond to this character, and often led those who knew him only through the medium of the press to think of him chiefly as a bitter satirist and vehement polemic. The asperity which marked some of his dogmatical and controversial writings, when thus contrasted with the prevailing character of his mind, is difficult to account for, and is certainly to be regretted. It proceeded no doubt in some measure

from his earnestness and ardour in the pursuit of truth,—from the high value which he set upon it when he thought he had acquired it,—and from the rapidity with which he often carried his first impulses into execution, which did not always allow him time to weigh the force of his expressions, or duly to consider the import which others would attach to them. The effect however was unfortunate in various ways; it impaired the efficacy of his exertions in promoting the cause he had so much at heart, by creating a spirit of reaction, and a sense of injury on the part of an opponent, who naturally resented imputations which he was conscious he did not deserve, and which possibly were not always intended, though the words might seem to imply them.

Mr. Wakefield's intention was to proceed with a translation and commentary on the other books of the New Testament on the same plan, but was not encouraged by the amount of public patronage which he experienced to proceed with his design. There can be no doubt that the commentary on St. Matthew, is a very extraordinary work for so young an author as Mr. Wakefield was at the time of its appearance; extraordinary for the general talent and acuteness of reasoning which it displays, but much more so for the wide and diversified research exhibited in the multiplicity of citations from writers of all descriptions, both ancient and modern, which might be thought to have required a long life to accumulate. Nevertheless, it is far from improbable, that even those who approved of his opinions, and were in other

respects favourable to his project, were apprehensive that a commentary on the whole New Testament, on such a scale, was as yet somewhat premature; and we cannot permit ourselves to doubt, that valuable as the commentary on St. Matthew unquestionably is, its merit would have been greatly enhanced, if its author could have afforded it the benefit of some few of the succeeding years, which were in a great measure devoted by him to biblical researches.

Previously to the appearance of this work, Mr. Wakefield had published "An Essay on Inspiration, considered chiefly with reference to the Evangelists;" in which, after stating the common notion on this subject to be that which reduced the writer to a mere passive vehicle of the Divine communications, and as it were an *amanuensis* of the Holy Spirit, he endeavours to shew that this notion is unnecessary to the credibility and authority of the sacred histories,—that it is inexpedient and improbable,—that it is disclaimed by the sacred writers themselves,—that it is inconsistent with those passages of their writings which present discrepancies on minor points, while they agree as to the main facts,—and on the whole, is detrimental to the cause of revelation. He contends that the influence of the Spirit, shed on the apostles and evangelists, was such as to remove their prejudices, till then unconquerable, as to the true intent of their Master's mission and spiritual kingdom, to strengthen their resolution, to enlarge their ideas, and to bring to their remembrance what Jesus had said to

them. But in other points, they retained the distinguishing features of their respective characters; and when they undertook to draw up a narrative of what they had seen and heard, we have the same reasons for believing them, as any other writers who appear to have been men of good understanding and integrity, to have had competent opportunities of observation, and no imaginable motive to deceive. He afterwards applies the same principle to the Epistles, especially those of St. Paul; and labours to shew that the authority of the New Testament, as the record of the gospel dispensation, is not diminished, but on the contrary greatly enhanced, by these views of the circumstances in which it was written. The work displays the author's usual clearness and force of reasoning, and strength of expression;—betraying no hesitation as to the certainty of his conclusions,—though perhaps, it may sometimes be thought, not quite so much allowance as might be wished for the different views of others. Shortly afterwards, appeared a “Dissertation on Baptism.” He maintains that by this word in the New Testament is intended immersion in water,—that it was required of converts, and converts only,—and that there is no reason from Scripture to think that it was intended to apply to the offspring, either infant or adult, of Christian parents.

At Warrington, Mr. W. also pursued with great ardour the study of the Hebrew and other kindred oriental dialects. To these he added the Coptic and Ethiopic, chiefly for the purpose of obtaining an acquaintance with the

versions of the New Testament in these languages, of which he availed himself to a great extent in his subsequent biblical labours. To the Ethiopic in particular he attached a very high value, and not unfrequently introduced emendations of the text or translation on its unsupported authority.

After the dissolution of the Warrington Academy, Mr. Wakefield, in the autumn of 1783, established himself with his family at Bramcote, near Nottingham; his object being to increase his income by taking a few pupils into his house. From hence he afterwards removed for a short time to Richmond, where his brother was then minister,* but soon returned to Nottingham. In this project he was not so successful as his undoubted learning and abilities might seem to have authorized him to expect. Possibly his secession from the church, the obnoxious opinions he had embraced, and (it must be admitted) the offensive style of some passages in his recent controversial publications, may have alienated some of his former friends; and he had not as yet had time to form new connexions to take their place. While waiting for pupils, he continued his theological studies with unremitted vigour; and presented the public with a portion of their fruits, in the first volume of "An Enquiry into

* The Rev. Thomas Wakefield, elder brother of our author, to whom he inscribes his "Remarks on the Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion," and whom he repeatedly mentions in his correspondence in terms of affectionate regard. Mr. T. Wakefield was thirty years Incumbent of Richmond, where he died, universally esteemed and respected, Nov. 26, 1806.

the Opinions of the Christian writers of the first three centuries, concerning the person of Christ." This volume does not bring down the enquiry lower than the conclusion of the apostolic age; and the plan not meeting with adequate encouragement, was not pursued any further. The single volume which was published, contains many valuable criticisms on the texts of the New Testament chiefly dwelt upon as proofs of the deity of Christ, which naturally add to our regret that the author was induced to abandon the further prosecution of his design. It would probably have thrown some useful light on the celebrated controversy between Horsley and Priestley, which about this time attracted so much of the public attention.—In 1784 he published, without his name, an excellent little tract, entitled "Directions for the Student in Theology," containing a variety of useful suggestions, well deserving of the attention of students of all ages. This tract is dedicated to Dr. Porteus, then Bishop of Chester, afterwards of London, in a very complimentary inscription; the author of which, however, was in no danger of being suspected of unworthy motives for saying more than he sincerely believed to be true.

Some years of Mr. Wakefield's life now passed away in a pretty uniform course; his time being chiefly engaged in tuition, and his leisure devoted to a variety of literary pursuits, except when they were interrupted by the severe attacks of a painful disorder in his left arm, which sometimes for weeks together disabled him for all laborious exertion of mind. For

this and for other reasons, he seems to have suspended in a considerable measure his theological investigations, and to have transferred his chief attention to the productions of Greece and Rome. In the year 1788, he printed at the Cambridge university press, an edition of Virgil's Georgics.

In June 1789, he brought out, under the same auspices, the first part of an extensive work, entitled "Sylva Critica; sive in auctores sacros profanosque commentarius philologus." The grand intention of the author, in the plan of this work, as he himself describes it,* was "the union of theological and classical learning; the illustration of the Scriptures by light borrowed from the philology of Greece and Rome; as a probable method of recommending the books of revelation to the notice of scholars, and thus promoting in the world, at the same time, a profitable *heathenism* (if I may be indulged in this singularity of expression for the sake of brevity), and a rational theology. I have long been persuaded," he continues, "that with honest minds, superior to the sordid allurements of interest, the capital obstacle to a tolerably general uniformity of sentiment on the fundamental points of Christianity, is the slender acquaintance which even the ministers and professors of the gospel themselves have made with the original language of the New Testament. These sacred oracles of divine truth are usually apprehended through the medium of an interpreter, and of course address themselves to

* Memoir, &c. vol. i. p. 293.

the understanding with a certain portion of ambiguity and mysticism. "They verily speak well, but we are not edified."

Certainly no position can well be more evident, than that a knowledge of the original languages of Scripture is highly important to the Christian minister; and essential to him who undertakes to criticize these inestimable records. But it may be doubted, whether there is not some other still more formidable obstacle to a uniformity of sentiment in dogmatical theology, when we find from experience, that of those who are placed by common consent in the first rank as scholars, some are to be found among the patrons of almost every sect and party into which the Christian world has been divided.

The first three parts of this work were printed free of expense, at the Cambridge university press; a privilege to which the author was readily admitted, as a graduate and member of the university, and which materially lightened the pecuniary burden of bringing out a work of this kind, which a scholar of very scanty private resources could never have undertaken, and from which in this instance, no motive of a merely mercantile character could tempt any of the ordinary patrons of literature to relieve him. When the same privilege was solicited for a fourth part of this work, it was withheld; not because it contained, or was supposed to contain, anything objectionable, but (as there is too much reason to believe) because the author had by this time made himself more and more obnoxious to the higher powers, by a

series of public protests against what he conceived to be corruptions and abuses, both in church and state, at a time when party rancour and political and religious bigotry were daily acquiring a more baneful ascendancy. As we have already mentioned (p. 164), the inconvenience occasioned to Mr. Wakefield by this disappointment was made up to him by the liberality of his friend Mr. Tyrwhitt.

Though Mr. Wakefield had quitted not only the ministry but the communion of the Established Church, and in his various publications had denounced her distinguishing doctrines in the strongest and most decided terms, he never formally joined himself to any other religious denomination. This arose, in a great measure, from an unconquerable dislike to the method of extemporaneous, or at least of free prayer, commonly used among the dissenters. Hence, during his residence at Warrington, he continued for some time to resort occasionally to the church; and though at Nottingham and elsewhere, he preached a few occasional sermons in different churches, he never officiated in any dissenting pulpit. A thanksgiving sermon, for the peace in 1784, which he preached for his brother in Richmond church, was afterwards printed. It is a spirited performance, and in elaborate correctness and polish of style is considerably superior to the greater part of our author's productions, which in general bear evident marks of the circumstances under which they were composed. Like Dr. Priestley, he commonly wrote too fast to be particularly careful about the minor graces of style; most

of his smaller pieces especially being thrown off at the impulse of the moment, and often under the influence of temporary excitement, he was satisfied if his meaning was understood, without seeking to display that finished elegance of composition which many would expect from an accomplished scholar.

There is reason to think that the anomalous insulated state into which Mr. Wakefield was thrown, by having quitted one religious communion without being able to satisfy himself in joining any other, materially influenced, perhaps more so than he was himself aware, the conclusions he afterwards adopted and maintained with respect to public social worship in general. In 1791, he published a pamphlet on this subject, entitled "An Enquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of Public Social Worship," in which he endeavours to shew that this is a practice countenanced neither by reason nor revelation,—neither by the precepts nor the example of Christ or his apostles. This production attracted a good deal of attention at the time, and received various answers, some more, some less successful, chiefly from writers among the Unitarian dissenters; who felt themselves aggrieved by the severity of its censures on themselves, and on the form of worship usually adopted in the dissenting churches. As a piece of reasoning, we must say that it appears to us very feeble and inconclusive. As far as the example of our Lord is concerned, it is true that most of the recorded instances of his devotions are cases of private prayer; and even that most remarkable one which occupies

the whole seventeenth chapter of John, though uttered in the presence and hearing of his disciples, is offered not *with* them but *for* them. But the admirable model which he gave them, in answer to their request that he would teach them to pray, is expressed in the plural form; he encourages them to offer their petitions to the Father when only two or three should be gathered together in his name; gathered, surely, not that each might do by himself that which was better done when he had entered into his closet and shut the door, but in order that they might unite in a common petition for common mercies. Moreover, he constantly resorted to the synagogue himself, and joined no doubt in the worship practised there. Had it been otherwise, the Pharisees, so ready at all times to find fault, would certainly not have missed so good an opportunity. As for the injunction against praying like the hypocrites in the synagogue, and at the corners of the streets (Matt. vi. 5), nothing can be more evident than that this is directed, not against public *social* prayer, but against private prayer performed in public. That we do not find in the New Testament any express injunction to practise social worship is not altogether true; but if it were, it would be no sufficient objection; for the practice is so universally prevalent among mankind, and Christianity is so essentially a social religion, that the first disciples would naturally take it for granted that they were to meet together for worship, if there were no positive injunction to the contrary. As to the mere *length* of the prayers in use in many religious societies, of

which Mr. Wakefield makes such heavy complaints, that is for the most part an affair of taste and habit, which different parties may surely be left to settle as they think fit, according to what experience proves to be best adapted to their own edification.

Among the numerous replies to this pamphlet, the most remarkable, and perhaps the most effective, was the celebrated "Thoughts on Public Worship," by Mrs. Barbauld; a performance, not less admirable for its eloquence and literary merit, than for the clear and decisive view which it presents of the argument on this important question. It well deserves, not only to be read, but to be carefully studied again and again; and we are certainly under obligations to Mr. Wakefield's "Enquiry," if for nothing else, yet certainly for having called forth in this Reply, one of the most powerful and eloquent pieces of argumentative prose composition in the English language.

It is worthy of notice, that notwithstanding the apparent analogy and connexion between the opinions on this point, of Mr. Wakefield and of Mr. Evanson, which has led to their being occasionally classed together, yet each differed from the other in his peculiar and distinguishing tenet. Mr. Evanson, while he rejected a weekly day of rest, was a decided advocate for social worship; which he practised statedly, both in his own house, and, when he had the opportunity, in communion with a society of Unitarian Christians. Mr. Wakefield, on the contrary, though he objects to the prevailing mode of employing the day, yet urges

us to sanctify the "Sabbath of Jehovah" with a veneration rigorously scrupulous, "as the most merciful institution ever devised for the more unfortunate of our own species, and the miserable brute creation, in which the labourer ceases from his toil, and the brute reposes as well as we."

In 1789, Mr. Wakefield published "Remarks on the Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion." In this valuable little work he has thrown together a series of short comments on various points connected with the discourses, the morality, and the character, of Jesus; to shew the reasonableness of his doctrines, which approve themselves to our understandings though many of them are such as reason alone, did not and probably could not discover. These are expressed in a simple, distinct, and concise form; but with very little of that variety and extent of illustration which the author could with ease have introduced. The principle of arrangement is not very obvious; the successive sections do not throw light upon each other, or tend to the full developement of any one leading argument; but each is in itself a distinct and detached argument tending to support the main proposition which it is the object of the whole work to establish. Being addressed professedly *ad populum*, it does not contain so much learned discussion, or classical allusion, as most of the author's publications; and it may be added, that as it has nothing of a controversial character, so it is much less marked by the vehemence and asperity of disputation for which he is in general so remarkable. In

point of style and composition, it is also one of the most favourable specimens of our author's manner.

In 1790, Mr. Wakefield was induced to quit Nottingham, in order a second time to assume the office of classical tutor in a dissenting academy. The New College at Hackney had been established in the year 1786, under apparently very favourable auspices; but from various causes, which it is unnecessary to detail minutely in this place, its prosperity was short-lived; a liberal fund was dissipated in a few years, and the institution came to nothing. Mr. Wakefield's connexion with it, however, was of still shorter continuance; for in consequence of unpleasant differences and jealousies, arising in some measure from the objections taken to his not frequenting any place of public worship, added to his own strongly-expressed disapprobation in many respects of the general plan and conduct of the institution, he found his situation so irksome and unpleasant, that he abandoned it at the end of the first session, in 1791. We have no reason to doubt that his abstaining from all public worship was perfectly conscientious on his part, and that the reasons he has assigned in his pamphlet on the subject, however unsatisfactory they may appear to others, were convincing to his own mind. But it cannot be wondered at, that previous to the public statement of his reasons, those who observed and disapproved of his conduct, without being aware of its motives, might ascribe it to a wrong cause; and that even afterwards, while they were ready to allow

every man's right to be fully persuaded in his own mind, and to act according to his sincere conviction, whatever it might be, they did not the less regret the turn which his speculations on this subject had taken. Nay, the more highly they estimated his talents and admired his general character, the more apprehensive they would naturally be of the dangerous influence (as they could not but consider it) which a man so deservedly respected and beloved might exercise in this important point on the young men who attended on his instructions.

From this time Mr. Wakefield ceased to have any concern in tuition, either public or private, and devoted himself entirely to the education of his own family, and to a variety of literary pursuits and studies, the results of which appeared in numerous and diversified publications. The first of these was his translation of the New Testament, with notes, in 3 vols. 8vo., which appeared towards the close of 1791. This work, which was published by subscription, was favourably received, and came to a second and improved edition in 1795. It is the most valuable of our author's contributions to theological literature, embodying the principal emendations suggested in the "*Sylva Critica*," and exemplifying on the whole in a very satisfactory manner the principles on which it is desirable that the translator of Scripture should proceed. In particular it comes nearer perhaps than any other has hitherto done, to the just medium between a loose paraphrase, and a servile adherence to the verbal construction of the original. A just regard for the

venerable character and authority of sacred writ, seems to preclude the translator from the same license in departing from the phraseology of his original, which he adopts without scruple in the case of any ordinary writer, and which is often unavoidable, when it is his object not merely to give what he believes to be his author's exact meaning, but to present it in such a form as he himself would probably have used if he had written in English. On the other hand, a rigid adherence to the original words, though it seems to claim the merit of exactness, is not always on that account a faithful representation of their true meaning. In the first place, it often happens that there are no English words exactly equivalent, so that we must resort to some kind of periphrasis; and besides, from the diversities of idiom and construction, the words, when we have assembled them together in an order which seems correspondent to the original, are far from exhibiting to the English reader a corresponding sense. In the historical books the more rigid method may sometimes be practicable; but in the argumentative parts of the epistles, those who have attempted it have too often perverted or obscured the original meaning, and have sometimes presented to us a collection of words to which we seek in vain to attach any meaning at all. Mr. Wakefield has therefore conceived himself entitled to make a further deviation in this part of his work from the strictly literal method, and has endeavoured to express in the nearest English form that he could find, what appeared to him to be the genuine sense of his author.

There are some peculiarities of expression in this translation, which are apt to appear pedantic and affected, particularly the almost invariable rejection of the definite article, wherever the Greek article is not inserted,* and the employment of the imperfect form,—“was walking,” “is saying,” &c., as the translation of the imperfect tenses in the original. In some instances these peculiarities are obviously carried to an extreme, so as to give rise to modes of expression which are both awkward and incorrect; but, in general, we apprehend that their awkwardness to our ears arises from their being unusual, and that they represent the true meaning more accurately than the forms to which we are more accustomed; and when our own language furnishes us with distinctions corresponding with tolerable exactness to those between the imperfect and the aörist tenses in the Greek, it seems unreasonable not to avail ourselves of them. The substitution of *will* for *shall*, which is almost universally employed in the public version in the translation of prophecy, will appear judicious or not, according as we conceive of the prophet as merely predicting, or as determining and appointing the events foretold. Thus, in the prophecies relating to the approaching subversion of the Jewish state, we must recollect who it is that speaks; not an ordinary prophet, but he who, in respect of the moral administration

* Thus, *εν ήμερα κρισεως* (Matt. xi. 22, 24), usually translated, “in *the* day of judgment,” Wakefield renders, “in *a* day of punishment.” In like manner, *άγιον πνευμα*, is most commonly, but not uniformly, translated, “*a* holy spirit;” or, as in Matt. iii. 11, “*a* holy wind.”

of this world, was inferior only to his Father who had placed all things under his feet. What *he* predicts, therefore, as belonging to the future history of that kingdom in which he was about to reign, may properly enough be regarded as taking place by his direction and appointment.

In his readings of the text, as we have already stated, Mr. Wakefield was accustomed to place great reliance on the oriental versions. Some of the variations which he has introduced on their authority carry their own recommendation along with them; in others, we are apt to think that he was unconsciously biassed by the more than ordinary degree in which he had made himself master of these resources of sacred criticism.

When the Unitarian Society first conceived the design of publishing an Improved Version of the New Testament, they proposed to adopt Mr. Wakefield's version for that purpose, to which he readily assented, and at the same time promised to revise his translation with great care, so as to present it to the Society in its most perfect state. It appeared, however, in the sequel, that the engagement he had entered into with his bookseller, on the publication of his second edition, precluded him from fulfilling his engagement to the Society till that edition was disposed of. For this reason, the design was for the time suspended; and many have regretted that when it was afterwards resumed, Mr. Wakefield's version could not have been taken for the basis of the Improved Version, instead of Newcome's. Not that it would have been at all more likely to

supersede the authorized version, for common use in Unitarian churches or families; for, all circumstances being considered, this was perhaps scarcely desirable; but it seems to them on the whole to present a greater number and variety of important corrections of the old version, while, with the exception of such peculiarities of diction as those already adverted to, it deviates less than Newcome's from that received phraseology, which has by long usage, established in its favour an almost insurmountable prepossession with all English readers.

After the cessation of Mr. Wakefield's connexion with the academy, he continued to reside at Hackney; occupied chiefly with his various literary engagements, and interested—perhaps too deeply interested—by the extraordinary occurrences of that remarkable period. The fourth part of his "*Sylva Critica*" was now offered as a candidate for the same patronage which its predecessors had experienced; but, as has already been intimated, it met with a different fate, so that the author and the public were indebted for its appearance in print to the liberal munificence of a private individual. The fifth and concluding part of this extensive, and on the whole very valuable and curious work, was afterwards brought out under the same patronage.

In March, 1792, Mr. Wakefield published a memoir of his own life, in one vol. 8vo. This very curious and entertaining performance, as may be supposed, is by no means limited to a mere personal narrative, but contains, in addition to much ingenious and highly-characteristic

disquisition, a great variety of anecdotes and spirited sketches of the different remarkable persons with whom he had been more or less connected. Never was there an autobiography which more effectually answered its purpose of exhibiting an accurate and vivid impression of the author's mind and character. Every part of it displays the same lineaments which we derive from his conduct through life, and from his numerous publications on other subjects; the same unwearied mental activity; the same devoted love of truth on every subject to which that activity was directed; the same zealous ardour in his attempts to discover it; the same uncompromising boldness and contempt of consequences in the public assertion of what he believed he had discovered; the same unmeasured strength and vehemence of expression; the same want of due allowance for the different conclusions and opinions of others; the same disregard of the unfavourable impression which his *apparent* bitterness and asperity might produce upon their minds. In relating the history of his connexion with dissenting academies, particularly with that of Hackney, he gives some very severe strictures on what he conceived to be radical defects in their system and management. Many of his criticisms were certainly not devoid of foundation, and in some more recent institutions exertions have been made, it is hoped not without success, to remove some of the deficiencies complained of; but it must we think be admitted, that in the tone and spirit of his censures, Mr. Wakefield did not always pay so much attention as might

have been wished to the maxim, which he quotes with so much approbation from his favourite Horace,—

“Nec tua laudabis studia, aut aliena reprehendes.”*

In some instances we are sorry to observe the apparent influence of personal pique occasioned by real or imagined slights, to which it might have been hoped that a man of so much distinguished and acknowledged eminence would have shewn himself superior. At the same time it is evident, that the occasional sallies which we are constrained to ascribe to this cause, were devoid of all malignity; and it must also be added, that in the second edition the greater part of them were either much softened or suppressed altogether.

It was impossible that a man of Mr. Wakefield's ardent turn of mind, though taking no active part in public affairs, and confined almost entirely to the peaceful pursuits and retirement of his study, should fail to take a warm and deep interest in the mighty struggles and revolutions of the eventful period in which he lived. Whatever he felt, he felt warmly; and, as we have already had abundant occasion to observe, he was in the habit of expressing it (at least when he took up his pen) in language of which he did not always take time to weigh and reflect upon the strength, or to consider the impression, often beyond what he anticipated or intended, which it would produce upon his readers. It cannot be wondered

* “Nor thou the favourite studies of thy friend
Disparage, nor thy own too much commend.”

at, that he should take up with eagerness and zeal what appeared to be the auspicious cause of truth and liberty ; and having identified this great cause with the political changes then in progress in France, he naturally reprobated the interference of the despotic powers of the continent to thwart the exertions of a great nation in liberalizing her institutions, and censured with his habitual earnestness and severity the conduct of the English government, in joining the crusade against the French republic. In 1794, he published "The Spirit of Christianity compared with the Spirit of the Times in Great Britain." He shews that the spirit of the gospel is wholly incompatible with the principles on which the statesmen of *Christian* nations (so called) are accustomed to engage in wars not merely of defence, but of aggression ; and exclaims, in the indignant tone which the occasion surely justified and deserved, against the gross inconsistency, with which not merely statesmen by profession, but even clergymen, were accustomed to characterize the war in which we were then engaged, as necessary for the support and defence of the Christian religion ! "I profess myself," says he in conclusion, a son of peace ; a lowly and insignificant, but conscientious follower of that Saviour, at whose coming peace was sung, and at whose departure peace was bequeathed. No consideration, I humbly hope, not even of life itself, unless in personal defence, could induce *me* to shed the blood of a fellow-creature, *even of a continental tyrant* ; nor could any motive but that of a strong sense of duty, have impelled me to

come forward to the public on this occasion. But there is a season, when inactivity were a crime, and public admonition, even at the hazard of personal comforts, rises into an *indispensable obligation*; to those at least, who were desirous that their Master should not be ashamed of them at his coming. I am expecting with trembling solicitude, amidst the incessant occupations of a literary life, that alarming catastrophe which the signs of the times indicate in my mind to be rapidly approaching; prepared to act or suffer, to live and die, in the service of *Christianity*; which is no other than the cause of *liberty*, and the consequent happiness of the human race; a liberty and happiness only to be raised on the foundation of that equality ascertained by the laws of our creation, and ratified by the gospel in every page, which acknowledges no distinction of bond or free. Interest may oppose, and sophistry may cavil; but equality, in its rational acceptation, as relating to civil privileges and impartial laws, is interwoven with Christianity itself; they must live or perish together. But they will *live*; and modern governments, with every appendage of wickedness and corruption, will flee in time from their genial influence, as beasts of prey to their dens of rapine and darkness, from the rising sun."

Shortly after this, our author was led to vindicate Christianity, not from the injuries inflicted by its professed or pretended friends, but from the open attack of an avowed adversary; in a Reply to the well known "Age of Reason." A corresponding Reply to the second part of

this Treatise came out in October, 1795. In this "it cannot be denied," say his biographers, "that the severities of reproof were dispensed with no sparing hand. The severities to which we allude were perhaps merited by this author, for 'the audacity of his assaults on those venerable systems, which have constituted, and still constitute, the delight, the hope and consolation of multitudes much wiser and better than himself,' yet we regret that they were resorted to in the present instance. The office of 'castigation' was unworthy of our friend's talents, and detrimental to his purpose of persuading others."* Both the first and second Reply, however, contained much good and sound argument, and many judicious observations which are well deserving of the attention, not merely of those who might be in danger of being seduced by the sophistries and gross mis-statements of the "Age of Reason," but of all who are desirous of understanding why they believe, and of being able to render a reason for their faith. For the benefit of such readers, it would be a real service performed, if these arguments could be divested of their personal and controversial character, which has now ceased, we may hope, in a great measure, to possess whatever propriety it may once have had, so as to present them to the general reader in a form better suited to that intrinsic and substantial interest which they can never lose.

It is due to Mr. Wakefield to add, that when a society "for Promoting Christian Know-

* Memoir, &c. vol. ii. p. 28.

ledge," was so ill-advised as to invoke against the publisher of the "Age of Reason" the unholy alliance of the arm of flesh, he did not hesitate to enter his public protest against such proceedings, as a violation of the essential and unalienable liberty of the human mind. In a letter to Sir John Scott, then Attorney-General, he urged with great force and eloquence the various motives derived from considerations of prudence, of philosophy, of justice and impartiality, of humanity and of religion, which ought to deter us from molesting any writer for the mere publication of his sentiments, however obnoxious and offensive.

Notwithstanding these occasional contributions to political and theological polemics, the greater part of Mr. Wakefield's time, at this period, was devoted to classical and other literary pursuits. He superintended new editions of Horace and Virgil, which are deservedly valued for their beauty and correctness; also a selection of the Greek Tragedies, in two volumes. About the same time he projected an edition of the Works of Pope, with remarks and illustrations; but this design proceeded no further than the first volume; as the appearance, in 1797, of Dr. Warton's edition was thought to interfere too much with the prospect of success in another undertaking of the same kind. That his labour however might not be entirely thrown away, he brought together the critical collections he had made, in another volume, entitled "Observations on Pope." He also conducted through the press an edition of Pope's Homer,

with additional notes, critical and illustrative, in eleven volumes.*

But his greatest literary work, and that by which his character as a classical scholar will be chiefly estimated, was a magnificent edition of Lucretius, in three vols. 4to. This is a work of much higher pretensions than the editions of ancient authors before mentioned; since it aims at the formation of an amended text from original materials of criticism, to a much greater extent; an object which in this instance had been more imperfectly attended to by preceding editors. We believe there is but one opinion as to the ability and success with which the work was now performed by Mr. Wakefield, leaving little to be gleaned in the way of further correction or improvement by those who might come after him. His Lucretius has been deservedly characterized as a work which would alone have transmitted his name to posterity with distinction, as among the most learned and industrious of critical editors. This splendid work is inscribed to Mr. Fox, in a very complimentary dedication, to which is added a very elegant copy of Latin verses. For this distinguished statesman, Mr. Wakefield always expressed the highest admiration and esteem, and this public mark of it led to a pretty frequent correspondence between them, chiefly

* We are sorry to observe, and deem it no more than justice that the fact should be generally known, that Mr. Wakefield has experienced the fate of many other distinguished critics, in having the most valuable of his notes pilfered without acknowledgment by succeeding editors. See some remarks on Trollope's "*Ilias Homeri*," Monthly Review for June, 1830.

upon subjects relating to classical literature, which continued during the remainder of Mr. Wakefield's life. These letters were afterwards, in 1813, collected and published in one octavo volume.

In the midst of these more important labours as a scholar and man of letters, Mr. Wakefield continued from time to time to occupy a passing hour in the more dangerous walk of political controversy; and several pamphlets appeared from his pen on the important questions which agitated men's minds at this critical and alarming period. They all breathe the same spirit; and though often expressed with a degree of vehemence and asperity little conformable to the amiable mildness which distinguished him in private life, yet, in other respects, they give a just impression of the character of the writer, ardent, with an utter forgetfulness and disregard of self, in behalf of what he deemed the cause of truth and justice. Of these it will perhaps be sufficient to notice particularly that which in the sequel was attended by unfortunate consequences to himself and his family.

In January, 1798, Dr. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, published "An Address to the People of Great Britain," the object of which was to support the government and measures of the existing administration. The spirit and tendency of this performance excited not a little surprise and disappointment among many of this eminent prelate's former admirers; and Mr. W. felt himself impelled on the spur of the moment to write and publish a reply to it. This pamphlet was written with great rapidity,

being finished for the press in a single day. As to its prevailing sentiments and language, we know not that they differed materially, either in spirit or strength from what the author had many times before offered to the public; unless it were in that passage where, in remarking on the bishop's assurance that there were hundreds of thousands of loyal and honest men as ready as himself to hazard every thing in defence of the country, Mr. Wakefield "has no difficulty in saying for himself, that he is not one of those hundreds of thousands so very loyal and so very honest as the Bishop of Llandaff." It should be observed, that his reason for this disclaimer is not a conscientious disapproval of defensive war in general, on principles believed to be those of Christianity, but an hostility to the present order of things, and even to the practical institutions of the country. He seems to intimate that the question, whether the country shall be governed, or as he styles it, robbed and oppressed, by its present rulers or by a foreign invader, is to him a matter of perfect indifference. "Let those who have brought us to this alarming crisis step forward in the day of danger, and fight the battles of their Baal and their Mammon; let these buckle on their panoply in defence of monarchy against republicanism, and stand up for domestic robbers against a foreign spoiler."

There cannot, we believe, be a doubt as to the strictly *legal* character of these expressions; and yet it is obvious, that in a country where freedom of thought and of speech are permitted to such an extent as to be of any practical ad-

vantage, similar expressions at a time of high party and political excitement are and must be tolerated. Accordingly, in almost all ordinary cases, the ruling powers are guided by the well-founded persuasion that their real strength would be rather diminished than increased by pursuing ebullitions like these with the full vengeance of the law. In this instance, however, from what motive is not very clear, a different course was adopted; and a prosecution was resolved on against the author and the publisher of this unfortunate pamphlet. Mr. Cuthell, the publisher, was first arrested, and the proceedings against him carried on, notwithstanding Mr. Wakefield's frank avowal of the authorship, and of his willingness to take the entire responsibility upon himself. That these were not mere words of course, he most honourably proved, by discharging the whole costs of Mr. Cuthell's prosecution, amounting to a sum equal to the entire annual income of all he was worth.

After a tedious suspense, to all appearance protracted by artificial and needless delays, for the express purpose of prolonging the anxiety and embarrassment of the parties, Mr. Cuthell's trial came on, Feb. 9, 1799; and immediately on his conviction, Mr. Wakefield's succeeded before the same jury. He thought proper to conduct his own defence, notwithstanding that he had generous offers of professional assistance. By so doing, it is not probable that he increased his chance of success; but thinking perhaps that it could not well be diminished (as in fact the harsh and oppressive mode in

which the whole proceeding was conducted shewed a determination in the authorities to render it not a fair trial, but a persecution), he chose to avail himself of the opportunity to declare publicly, in the free and undaunted manner which was natural to him, his opinion of the moral and political character of the administration of that day. "Of men like these," said he, "let me never deserve the friendship, nor regret the enmity. Their approbation is indelible reproach, their persecution the truest panegyric." That he was convicted under such circumstances, was almost a matter of course, when the temper and spirit of the times and of the government are considered. After a delay of a few weeks, he was sentenced to two years imprisonment in Dorchester gaol; a place which would seem to have been selected, according to the practice too common in state prosecutions, for the purpose of aggravating the nominal punishment, by removing the scene of it to a great distance from all his personal connexions and customary pursuits.

It is hardly necessary to state, that his imprisonment, independently of the personal restraint, was embittered by no small portion of those petty annoyances which are not the less serious in their effects because they relate to the various minor details of everyday life, and to continually recurring restrictions and privations from which a man of refined tastes, accustomed to the intercourses of cultivated society, must suffer infinitely more than the ordinary inmates of such places. Still, what he felt as the heaviest grievances, were the interruption to his literary

pursuits, and, above all, the limited intercourse he could be permitted to enjoy with his family, whose society was the chief source of his happiness, and who had taken up their residence for the time at Dorchester, for the express purpose of being near him and visiting him at their pleasure. This mournful privilege, however, was speedily curtailed by an arbitrary order of the magistrates, and their communications limited to certain hours on four days in the week. With the benevolent kindness which was natural to him, Mr. Wakefield occupied and beguiled many of the lonely hours which this harsh regulation imposed on him, by the friendly interest which he took in the welfare of his fellow-prisoners; to most of whom the intercourse and kind attention of a gentleman and a Christian, disposed to contribute what in him lay to their benefit, was indeed a novelty. In various instances he was enabled, either by his own exertions or by the assistance of his friends, to render them essential service. At the assizes, when several criminals were left for execution, he obtained permission to visit them in their solitary cells, where he exerted himself to the utmost in preparing their minds for their awful situation, and had the satisfaction to find that his pious and benevolent labours for this purpose were not altogether without success.

The severe trial to which Mr. Wakefield and his family were at this time subjected, brought along with it one very important compensation, which must have gone far to counterbalance the immediate distress,—as it shewed them by

experience the valuable resource they possessed in the kindness and active service of many attached friends; a resource, the worth of which they could hardly estimate at its full amount till circumstances arose to put it to the proof. It occurred to several of these friends, that now was the time to obtain some improvement to Mr. Wakefield's slender fortune, while the severity of his sentence was fresh in recollection. The plan was immediately carried into execution, and met with a success far exceeding their expectations; a sum of five thousand pounds being raised by the liberal contributions not only of those by whom Mr. Wakefield was already personally known and esteemed, but of other distinguished persons, who knew only his eminence as a Christian scholar and a man of letters, and the manner in which he had been made a sufferer in the cause of truth and liberty.

Most of Mr. Wakefield's literary undertakings were greatly impeded, if not altogether suspended, by his unavoidable separation from his books; but he published a volume of essays translated from Chrysostom, and also a small treatise, entitled "*Noctes Carcerariæ, sive de legibus metricis Poetarum Græcorum qui versibus hexametris scripserunt, disputatio.*"* Soon afterwards he printed the "*Plan and Conditions of a New Greek and English Lexicon;*" with a view to which he had already made large collections in the course of his extensive reading,

* *Evenings in Prison; or, a Dissertation on the Metrical Rules observed by the Greek Poets who wrote in hexameter verse.*

and was prepared not only to execute the work on a new and much improved plan, but to add many thousand words of that most copious language which did not appear to have attracted the attention of any previous lexicographer. The proposal of giving the interpretations in English was at that time new, or nearly so, and was probably regarded as an alarming innovation by certain lovers of things as they were. We are now more familiar with it; and are apt to wonder that a change so obviously recommended by propriety and convenience had not been introduced long before. The public however did not encourage the scheme as much as might have been expected, and it was accordingly laid aside.

At length, on the fourth of June, 1801, Mr. Wakefield left Dorchester, to return with his family to Hackney. For some months past he had been preparing a course of lectures on Virgil, the delivery of which commenced almost immediately after his restoration to his friends. These lectures occupied him till the beginning of the following month, when he finished the first course, designing to resume them in the ensuing spring. But it pleased a wise though inscrutable Providence to order it otherwise. Whether his long imprisonment had materially injured and weakened his constitution, or whether, as is highly probable, the excitement occasioned by his return from seclusion to the society of his friends, and the other active occupations in which he was immediately engaged, were a transition too sudden and violent for his not very robust frame, it may not

be easy to decide; but towards the latter end of August he experienced an attack of typhus fever, which carried him off, Sept. 9, 1801, in the forty-sixth year of his age. His remains were interred at Richmond, where a mural monument is erected to his memory.

The removal in the prime of life from this scene of things, of one so eminently qualified to adorn and improve it, excited a very general feeling of lamentation and regret in the wide circle of his friends; and many of the most eminent characters of the day hastened to give their testimony to his distinguished merit as a scholar, a man, and a Christian. From among these, we subjoin the following very just remarks by the celebrated Dr. Parr. After deploing the untimely loss of one from whom so much might still have been expected in advancing years, he thus proceeds:*

“Yet surely, our regret for the loss of future instruction will be much allayed by the remembrance of that which he has already communicated to us, and of his merit in the communication. Whatsoever the hand of *Mr. Wakefield* found to do, he habitually and instinctively did it ‘with all his might.’ He knew the value of every fleeting moment; he improved every talent which a gracious Providence had entrusted to him; and, in the course of his whole life, how few are the hours which he wasted in idleness, in folly, or even in those innocent amusements which ‘pass away like the trace of a cloud.’

* Life of Wakefield, ii. 324.

“In diligence, doubtless he surpassed any scholar with whom it is my lot to have been personally acquainted ; and though his writings now and then carry with them some marks of extreme irritability, he was adorned, or I should rather say, he was *distinguished*, by one excellence which every wise man will admire, and every good man will wish at least to emulate. *That* excellence was in truth a very rare one ; for it consisted in the complete exemption of his soul from all the secret throbs, all the perfidious machinations, and all the mischievous meannesses, of envy. * * *

“For my part, I shall ever think, and ever speak of Mr. Wakefield, as a very profound scholar, as a most honest man, and as a Christian, who united knowledge with zeal, piety with benevolence, and the simplicity of a child with the fortitude of a martyr. Under the deep and solemn impressions which his recent death has made upon my mind, I cannot but derive consolation from that lesson which has been taught me by one of the wisest among the sons of men : ‘The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seem to die, and their departure is taken for misery ; but they are in peace.’ ”*

* *Memoirs of the Life of G. Wakefield*, vol. ii. 324.

WILLIAM FREND,

THE last survivor of the honourable band, who, at the period of which we have now been treating, witnessed a good confession, by sacrificing worldly possessions and flattering prospects in the avowal of Unitarian principles, was born at Canterbury, Nov. 22, 1757. His father was an opulent tradesman and a leading member of the corporation of that city, having twice served the office of chief magistrate. He received his early education at the King's School at Canterbury, in which seminary he had among his contemporaries his cousin, Herbert Marsh, the late Bishop of Peterborough, so well known as the translator of Michaelis, and as one of the most learned theologians of his time in the church of England, the late Lord Chief-Justice Tenterden, and several others who rose to distinction in various walks of life.

Mr. Frend was originally intended for a mercantile life, and with this view was sent to St. Omers, and afterwards to Quebec, a short time before the breaking out of the American war. This event probably threw a cloud over his commercial prospects; for after remaining at Quebec a few weeks (during which he appears to have served with the other inhabitants as a volunteer in the defence of the place against

the attack made upon it by the American forces in the first year of the war), he returned to England, and expressed a wish to change his course of life and enter into the church. With his father's concurrence, he was accordingly entered at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1776. Here he quickly distinguished himself in the usual course of study prescribed for under-graduates, and in 1780 took his degree of B.A., with the rank of second wrangler, and a Smith's prize man. At Christ's College he was for some time a pupil of Paley, then one of the tutors of that College; and if, as is probable, he attended the lectures on the New Testament delivered by this distinguished person, it may readily be presumed that principles were then instilled, which led him by degrees to reject the dogmas of orthodoxy. His attention, however, by his own account, was chiefly confined to mathematical pursuits. "We sometimes had lectures on the Greek Testament, but they were little regarded; and the sermons which we were obliged to hear, were not calculated to make a deep and lasting impression. In short, I looked forward, like those around me, to the time of taking our degrees, and my studies were chiefly directed to those subjects which are now almost the only road to academical honours and emolument."* In the course of the year after taking his first degree, he removed to Jesus College, where, through the patronage of Dr. Caryl, the master, he was

* Sequel to the Account of Proceedings in the University of Cambridge, &c.

speedily elected fellow, and appointed to the tutorship of the College.

“Becoming thus early, that is, in little more than a year from the time of taking my degree, tutor of a College, I had,” says he,* “sufficient employment on my hands; and it cannot be expected that divinity, a study of no great repute in the University, should occupy much of my time. I had more than sufficient knowledge for episcopal chaplains; and my reputation was too high for them to enter into a close investigation of my abilities. Various circumstances lead men to the train of thoughts which materially alters their situation in life; and it is difficult for them to trace back to its source their departure from established opinions. I can remember only, that I was not much attached to authority; yet I had my prejudices against the dissentients from the established church, and conceived myself, like the generality of persons with whom I conversed, a believer in the trinity. As soon, however, as my office permitted me, I entered more seriously upon the study of divinity; and my faith probably was first shaken by learning the Hebrew language, and consequently, by paying a greater attention to the Scriptures. I recollect also a circumstance which might lead me to an acquaintance with those writers, from whom, without acknowledging the obligation, many of the modern divines have borrowed their opinions. Previous to a little journey I was about to make,—it might be two or three

* Sequel, &c. p. 104.

years after the commencement of these scriptural studies,—I looked round our College library for a small pocket volume to amuse me on the road, and the Racovian catechism falling in my way, seemed well adapted for the purpose. This book I took with me; and the plainness and clearness with which most of the propositions in it are laid down, made an impression on my mind; but though the comparison of it with the church catechism was not in favour of the latter, I was resolved not to involve myself in controversial divinity, till I had searched further at the fountain head for the truth or the falsehood of my opinions. The result of my inquiries was, that I made up my mind on the doctrine of the trinity (the great error of the Christian world), and was thus freed from the shackles of the church; for, if it could deceive me in so essential a point as the nature of the being to whom I had been taught to pay my adorations, it could have no pretensions in any other article to implicit obedience. Hence I studied theology with more ardour, making the Scriptures my basis, and in every difficulty seeking for information from the voluminous exertions of the fathers, the *Critici Sacri*, the *Fratres Poloni*, and the valuable researches of later times.”

In the mean time he was presented to the small living of Madingley, in Cambridgeshire, of which the distance being not such as to interfere with his academical duties, he continued to officiate as the zealous and active incumbent, during a period of nearly four years; particularly interesting himself in the

instruction of the poor, and the establishment of Sunday schools in his parish. Of this excellent institution, then in its infancy, he appears to have been a zealous promoter; and to have circulated many thousand tracts in his own parish and elsewhere, for this and other objects connected with the diffusion of religious education. In June, 1787, however, the studies and reflections above described had brought him to the painful conviction, that the doctrines and discipline of the church differed so widely from his views of Scripture truth, as to forbid his continuing any longer a member of a trinitarian establishment. He accordingly resigned his living, though he still retained his fellowship, and his appointment as tutor of the College; which, as they required no subscription or continued declaration of conformity, appeared to him to be not inconsistent with his change of religious belief. He did not, however, content himself with a quiet and silent retirement; but thought it his duty to make one effort more to liberate others, if possible, from that yoke of subscription which he had found so oppressive and intolerable. With this view, he gave notice of his intention to move a grace in the University, to discontinue the subscription to religious tests on the admission to academical degrees. A grace to this effect was soon afterwards proposed by Dr. Edwards, and rejected; on which Mr. Frend, in a more public manner, renounced his connexion with the church. This he did in a formal declaration prefixed to a pamphlet, entitled "Thoughts on Subscription to Religious Tests, in a Letter

to the Rev. H. W. Coulthurst.”* The argument on this question had of late years been so repeatedly and earnestly urged on the attention both of the University and the church, that it may well be supposed that the subject was exhausted ; and in fact little remained for our author but to state over again, in a clear and forcible manner, with the freshness of novelty in statement and application, what had been said by many able and eminent men before him. But the claims of truth and right cannot be too frequently urged and repeated ; and it may be that their paramount importance will at length be practically acknowledged, and the reign of prejudice and bigotry finally put down. He soon afterwards published a series of short papers, entitled “Mr. Coulthurst’s Blunders Exposed,” containing a review of several texts on which that gentleman had recently dwelt in sermons preached before the University, as proofs of the trinity. These papers exhibit great ability and theological learning ; and also a pretty strong infusion of that personal sarcasm in which the writer was not seldom prone to indulge. These papers attracted the attention of Mr. Lindsey, who speaks of them in high terms of commendation in letters to the author about this period. Previous to his quitting the church, Mr. Frend had not cultivated the acquaintance of any of the most distinguished Unitarians of the day ; but from this time his intercourse with Mr. Lindsey and Dr. Priestley, particularly the

* Afterwards Dr. Coulthurst, and Vicar of Halifax.

former, was very intimate and frequent. Mr. Tyrwhitt, of his own College, and Mr. Hammond, formerly fellow of Queen's, and minister of a church in Cambridge, but who had retired from the establishment on embracing Unitarian sentiments, were among his most particular and valued friends.

When Mr. F. was called on to preach in due course before the University, he did not hesitate openly to avow and maintain the opinions he had espoused, from the pulpit of St. Mary's. Such was the character of the man; who was not to be deterred from doing or saying what he conceived that a regard to truth and conscience required, by any fear of alarming the timid, or of offending those in authority.

Towards the close of 1788, Mr. Frend's ardent and active mind, impelled by a zealous attachment to the new views of Christian truth which he had embraced, led him to appeal to the public for their vindication, in two short but well-argued and impressive addresses "to the Members of the Church of England, and to Protestant Trinitarians in general;" exhorting them to turn from the false worship of three persons, to the worship of the one true God. These tracts, from their plain, forcible, and concise expression, and their judicious selection of a few of the main points of the argument which admitted of being clearly and effectively stated in a small compass, are particularly well adapted for circulation among those whom it might be difficult to induce to look into a larger and more elaborate treatise. The author avows and glories in his own change,

and calls upon those who like him have been enabled to discern the truth, to come forward boldly and profess it. After giving a specimen of Scripture doxologies, he thus proceeds :

“Such, my brethren, are the Scripture forms ; and now, let me ask you, where are yours to be found ? Not in Scripture, I assure you ; but in mass-books, in prayer-books, established by authority, in decrees of popes and councils, and in acts of parliament. Are mass-books, decrees of popes and councils, or acts of parliament, the laws of Christians ? I detest and abjure them all ; for neither pope, nor council, nor king, nor bishop, nor synod, nor parliament, have power to impose any form whatever, much less their impious forms, on Christians. I myself indeed have obeyed these things ; I have been a servant of antichrist ; but I thank God, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he has enabled me to tear from my forehead the accursed mark.”*

An exhortation, penned in such a style as this, proceeding from a fellow and tutor of a College, might well be expected to excite the alarm and displeasure of the higher powers ; and the master (Dr. Beadon, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester) was presently induced to displace him from the office which he had now held for seven years, very much to his own credit and the advantage of the College ; exerting for this purpose what our author laboured to shew was a vigour beyond the law. Nevertheless, the Bishop of Ely, in the exercise of

* Second Address, p. 9.

his authority as visitor, confirmed the master's decree; and by this act and his voluntary resignation of his living, Mr. Frend was deprived of more than two-thirds of his income. Thus all his promising prospects in life, and his reasonable ambition for distinction in that profession to which he had devoted himself, were now at an end. But this was a result for which he was well prepared; he saw that it was inevitable, and was ready to encounter it for the sake of Christian integrity and a conscience void of offence. If he had also been called upon to resign the friendship and attachment of valued connexions, and to sever the ties which bound him to affectionate relatives, he would not have shrunk even from so severe a trial of his principles. But this he was spared. His father, though much mortified that his expectations of his son's advancement should be thus disappointed, never manifested any displeasure, or diminution of paternal regard.

Being no longer detained by academical engagements, Mr. Frend now occupied some time in a tour on the continent. It was the early dawn of the French revolution; when all men's minds were earnestly engaged in watching the indications for good or for ill in the approaching movement; and most of those who valued civil and political liberty not merely as a national privilege, but as the birthright of all mankind, beheld with joyful sympathy the expected emancipation of a mighty and enlightened people. That Mr. Frend was one of these, may naturally be supposed; but in pro-

portion to the extent of the sanguine anticipations which he at first indulged, were the depth and keenness of his regret at the sad reverse which too quickly overclouded the promising prospect. On a later occasion, he expresses himself on the subject in these terms:

“ Sir,—the idea of an Englishman entertaining the levelling principle, is absurd, and is countenanced only by those associations which endeavour to set us at variance with each other; and the term republican is employed for the same odious purpose. I have read much, Sir, on the subject of government; and by spending the greater part of three years in different tours on the continent, have had frequent opportunities of comparing with our own the various forms which prevail abroad; and I maintain that, excepting the small democratical cantons of Switzerland, we have the greatest claim to the title of republicans of any nation in Europe. If to be an advocate for the just rights of the people,—if to conceive that liberty depends on the people declaring their sentiments by representatives in parliament,—if to contend strenuously for the independence of the house of commons on every person except the people,—if to wish for a better representation of the people,—if these, sir, are the sentiments which will entitle men exclusively to the name of republicans, I acknowledge that I am a republican. I exult in the privilege of my birthright; and being an Englishman, I rejoice that I am also a republican. * * *

“ But, sir, I am accused of a still greater crime;—I rejoiced at the success of the French

revolution. Yes, sir, I did rejoice at the success of the French revolution; and is there an Englishman who did not exult on this occasion? At what period did I rejoice? Was it not at the time when every good man rejoiced with me,—when tyranny received a fatal blow,—when despotism was overthrown by the united efforts of all orders of men in an extensive empire? Was it not, sir, at the time when that horrid dungeon was destroyed, in which had been tormented so many wretched victims of caprice and effeminate cruelty? Was it a crime, sir, to rejoice, when the whole nation was of one mind, and this university thought it a duty to impress the sentiment on our young men, by giving them, as a proper subject for the exercise of their talents, the taking of the bastile? I did, sir, rejoice at the success of the French revolution; but does it follow that I was pleased with the scenes which succeeded, that I now look with joy and not with horror at the dreadful outrages to which that country has been exposed? The massacres and bloodshed, disgracing so noble a cause, have pained every lover of freedom, and viewing the conflict of the most horrid passions of the human mind, we have been left in a wretched state of suspense, and not having sufficient grounds for uniting fully in our wishes for the success of any party, we have conceived that silence on French affairs is most desirable.”*

On his return from the continent, Mr. Frend

* Account of the Proceedings in the University of Cambridge, &c. p. 91.

again took up his residence at Cambridge, where having no longer any official duty, he occupied himself in private studies, chiefly connected with theology. From an early period he had paid particular attention to the Hebrew language; and he now took an active part in a plan which we have already mentioned, projected by Dr. Priestley, in conjunction with Mr. Lindsey and several other learned friends, for a revised translation of the Scriptures. Mr. Frend's part was the Pentateuch and the other historical books of the Old Testament, of which he had executed a considerable portion, when the destruction of a great part of what was prepared for publication in the riots at Birmingham, put an end to the scheme, and it was never afterwards resumed. The principle on which this work was carried on was to adhere as closely as possible to the style and phraseology of the authorized version,—never deviating from it except where it was necessary to give a more correct representation of the original; or where the amended text, derived from the more extended critical researches of modern times required a corresponding change in the translation. We have no means of knowing the character of that portion of the work which had been actually completed; but from the learning and eminence of the gentlemen engaged, we cannot doubt that it would have been a valuable accession to the treasures of biblical literature. That it would have made its way into general use, as a substitute for the present authorized version, none of its promoters it is likely were sanguine enough to expect;

nor perhaps was its reception in such a character a thing desirable in itself. In fact it will almost admit of a doubt, whether the general adoption of any one version exclusively sanctioned by public authority, is not attended by practical inconveniences and dangers more than sufficient to counterbalance its advantages. In our own case, the long continued exclusive use of King James's translation has given it a sort of authority, to which, with all its acknowledged merits, it is not entitled, and has even clothed it, in the estimation of many, with a sacred character which is due to the original alone. Instances, moreover, are not unfrequent, even in the writings of learned divines, of arguments and doctrinal inferences founded not on the original, but on the peculiarities and mistakes of our authorized version.

In the beginning of the year 1793, just after the execution of Louis XVI., and when we were on the point of going to war with republican France, Mr. Frend published a pamphlet entitled "Peace and Union, recommended to the associated bodies of Republicans and Anti-republicans." After deploring the shocking excesses which had disgraced the progress of the French revolution, he endeavours to satisfy the former party that the constitutions of France and America, whatever we may think of them in the abstract, are by no means adapted for this country,—that it is most desirable that our own constitution be amended, and not overthrown; and proceeds in a tone upon the whole calm and dispassionate, to point out various particulars in our present systems of law and

government, and also in the discipline of the church, which in his opinion called for reformation. At a later period the author himself speaks of this tract in the following terms:—
“The pamphlet which occasioned the censure is before the public, and I congratulate myself that we live in times that if it were now published, it would scarcely attract attention. But at that time contending parties were worked up to a state of feverish excitement and exasperation: the ruling powers were determined to put down with a high hand the most moderate propositions of reform; while there were others whom nothing would have satisfied but the most extensive organic changes.”

Mr. Frend laboured to keep the middle path between these equally objectionable extremes; but did not obtain credit for his moderation. Scarcely had the pamphlet appeared when a great ferment was excited among the heads of houses, and others bent on maintaining all things as they were. The master and a majority of the fellows pronounced a sentence of exclusion from the college, and a prosecution was instituted in the Vice-Chancellor's court, the legality of which, to say the least of it, was very questionable, which ended in his banishment from the university. The proceedings were called a trial, but they scarcely deserve that name; if it be the characteristic of a trial properly so called, to present a patient unprejudiced examination of the truth, by an impartial umpire sitting as judge between the contending parties. For the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Milner, who by his office occupied this position,

was far from discharging its duties, but exercised with very little disguise the functions of a prosecutor rather than that of a judge. So little did he regard this as a subject of shame or regret, even after the heat and excitement of the occasion were over, that twenty years afterwards, in a pamphlet on the Bible Society controversy, he takes credit to himself for having, by his *vigorous exertions*, "effected the banishment of a very turbulent member of the university, on account of his disaffection to the ecclesiastical constitution of his country."

Mr. Frend defended himself with great vigour and ability; but it would be tedious here to go into a minute detail of the particulars, which are recorded at great length in a full report afterwards published by the defendant of these proceedings. On several important points he certainly succeeded in placing his opponents clearly in the wrong; it may however be doubted whether it was worth while pertinaciously to contest the proof of publication of a pamphlet with the author's name at full length in the title page; a fact of which, as he himself acknowledges, not a man in the court entertained a moment's doubt. Other parts of the defence had no bearing on the real merits of the case; and had no other object or tendency than to make the prosecutor, Dr. Kipling, appear very ridiculous and contemptible;—a purpose which it must be admitted that they answered most effectually. In the course of these proceedings, both in the college and before the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Frend received the active assistance and support of several distinguished members

of the university : Mr. Tyrwhitt, of whose name we have already made honourable mention, Mr. Lambert, senior fellow of Trinity, and Mr. Jones, the principal tutor of the same college. The ill health of his relative, Mr. Herbert Marsh, was the only reason why he was not also of the number. The case was removed by appeal into the court of delegates, where the sentence of the Vice-Chancellor was confirmed. An application was afterwards made to the Court of King's Bench, which refused to interfere in the matter.

The sentence passed on Mr. Frend only went to remove him from residence at the university, not to expel him, or even to deprive him of his fellowship, which he continued to hold till his marriage in 1808. Separated however from the advantages of residence, this not only supplied a very slender income, but was no longer attended by its chief recommendation to a man of letters, in the opportunity of resorting to libraries, and other sources of information not so easily procured elsewhere. He therefore fixed his residence in London, and sought to make up the deficiencies of his income by teaching mathematics, and by various literary engagements. Here he published, in 1796, the first part of his "Principles of Algebra," with an Appendix by his friend, Baron Maseres. This is a work of very considerable merit; excellent in some points as a practical elementary treatise, and containing at the same time many original, with some paradoxical notions on the branch of science to which it relates. Those who have been accustomed to hear arithmetic and geometry

spoken of as the *exact* sciences, may be apt to wonder how the general principles of number can present any doubtful questions, on which it is possible that men who have carefully and profoundly studied the subject should come to different conclusions ; or how it should happen that one such man could be found to denounce the doctrine and procedure of another as groundless and absurd. Yet such is apparently the language in which Mr. Frend speaks in this treatise of the practice of the art, and the statement of its theoretical principles, as exhibited by almost all other algebraists. This singular phenomenon is to be ascribed, not to any uncertainty in the principles and conclusions of arithmetical science, nor even to any real difference between the opinions of Mr. Frend and other eminent mathematicians, but chiefly to an injudicious mode of representing those principles, adopted by many writers on algebra, resulting perhaps in some instances from a misconception on their part of their real nature. Numbers have been sometimes represented as divisible into two classes, positive and negative ; the former greater than nothing, the latter less than nothing ; and the older elementary writers took great but fruitless pains to explain to their readers the nature of numbers of this latter class, and to make them comprehend, among other mysteries, how it was that when two numbers, both less than nothing, are multiplied together, the result is a product greater than nothing. Mr. Frend has very sufficiently exposed the absurdity of this language ; but he has not shewn, in fact he does not appear to

have been aware, that it is the language *only* which is absurd; that the *rationale* of the method, in all the varieties of its application, admits of explanation on the same simple and satisfactory principle on which he has himself explained a particular case; and that the paradoxical modes of expression to which he objects, are merely abbreviated statements of a process which, if rightly pursued, in no single instance leads to an erroneous result. Much of the absurd language, and injudicious attempt at illustration, (*reasoning* it can hardly be called), which is exposed in this treatise, has been deservedly abandoned by later writers; a change for the better, to which its publication may perhaps have in some measure contributed. But it is much to be regretted, that a mind so competent to the task of substituting something better, should so often have rejected, not merely the futile explanations, but the realities themselves. But to follow this argument further would lead us into discussions foreign to the object of this work. The treatise not only displays the author's talents and peculiarities as a mathematician, but presents other curious incidental indications of the general character of his mind. The following is the concluding paragraph:—

“The investigation of the properties of equations is endless; it is with them as with intelligent beings. There is no limit to the number of modes of each form. There is no limit to the number of forms. There is no limit to the number of orders. There is no limit to the number of classes. Each mode has its peculiar

curve. The lives of men of the first talents have been employed on a single curve, and there are not names given to a hundred species of curves. By the class of intelligent beings next in rank above man, all these equations and all these curves are, perhaps, thoroughly understood; and the next class excels them as much as they do us. How great then must be that Being, to whom the thoughts of all these orders of beings are known at a moment's glance; and how insignificant in the eye of reason are those nations, which lay down rules for thought, and persecute for opinions."

In 1800, Mr. Frend published "Animadversions on the Bishop of Lincoln's Elements of Christian Theology;" an able and spirited pamphlet, in which the argument on many of the disputable points advanced in the Bishop's treatise, relative to the constitution and leading doctrines of his church, is discussed with great acuteness and force of reasoning. In particular, the claim of the prelates of a protestant establishment to a distinct and peculiar character, transmitted by an unbroken descent from the apostles,—which it is impossible to prove, and which at all events can be traced only through the corrupt channel of the church of Rome,—is treated with the ridicule and contempt which so extravagant a pretension deserves. He shews that, according to the only authority to which a consistent protestant can bow, no member of a Christian church is invested with any priestly office, which should entitle him in that capacity to do any thing which might not be done with equal effect by any other person equally qua-

lified. In one sense every Christian is a priest, since all are alike capable of offering up for themselves and their brethren, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the God of their Lord Jesus Christ.—In two letters on Baptism and on the Lord's Supper, the author endeavours to make it appear that both these positive ordinances, as they are usually called, of the Christian church, were limited in their original institution to the apostolic age. Into the discussion of this question we are not desirous to follow him at present; some of his arguments are applicable chiefly to the misconceptions and perversions which have prevailed in later times, and to the false doctrines which have been connected with and founded upon them. But we fully agree with the author's concluding remark, that "it should be our business to attend more to the spirit than the form of the institution, to be careful to preserve it from abuse, to make it the sign of the Saviour's love to mankind, and not the badge of a party."

It will be presumed that Mr. Frend took a warm interest in the political questions of the day, which not unfrequently called his pen into exercise. In 1799, when Mr. Pitt first brought forward the scheme of an income tax, he published "Principles of Taxation;" in which he took up the alleged ground of this impost, namely, the more equitable adjustment of taxation to the means of the respective contributors; shewing that this principle was by no means carried out to the required extent, as long as no distinction was made between the same nominal income derived from a free-

hold estate, from a life income, and from the exercise of a laborious profession. He then, by a species of ingenious mathematical analysis, endeavours to deduce the principles of an equitable adjustment, by means of which tax-payers of all these different classes shall stand in the same relative positions after the payment as before. With these modifications, he approves of the principle of an income tax, and in common with all merely theoretical writers, prefers, in all cases, direct to indirect taxation.

About the same time appeared "A View of the Effects of Paper Money on the Price of Provisions." He shews very clearly that the natural and almost inevitable tendency of an inconvertible paper currency, the amount of which may be increased at pleasure by those who have an interest in extending it, must be to create a proportionate increase in the nominal price of every article of consumption. By the suspension of cash payments at the bank of England, this effect was certainly produced to a considerable extent. That it was not carried much further, must be ascribed in a great measure to the influence of public opinion, and to a certain undefinable timidity, which restrained those who seemed to have the power of issuing paper money to an indefinite amount, from using that power on the scale which their avowed principles would have justified, and seemed almost to require. The fallacy of these principles is well exposed by Mr. Frend; but his proposal that the magistrate should be empowered from time to time to

regulate the rate of wages, according to the gradual rise in the price of provisions, will not bear examination. Whenever the public authorities have attempted to exercise a power like this, they have invariably done mischief.

In 1804, Mr. Frend commenced a series of annual publications, entitled "Evening Amusements, or the Beauty of the Heavens Displayed;" giving a description in plain and simple language of the most remarkable phenomena of the heavenly bodies for each month in the year. The sameness and monotony which might otherwise have been complained of in such a detail, is relieved by a variety of curious reflections and discussions,—sometimes on questions connected with astronomical science, sometimes on the most convenient modes of studying it, or the most valuable practical applications of it,—or at others on interesting topics of religion and morality, history or political philosophy, occasionally suggested to his own discursive mind by associations with his main subject not easily traced by an ordinary reader. This work was carried on through a series of nineteen years, forming a complete metonic cycle, after which the positions and phases of the moon are renewed very nearly in the same order as at first. It was not unfavourably received by the public, and must have had a considerable and extensive influence in diffusing a taste for astronomy; or, at all events, in leading and disposing the young, for whom it was chiefly intended, to direct something more than an ignorant and uninstructed gaze at the splendid phenomena of the heavens.

At the conclusion of the volume for 1809, he takes the opportunity of paying a just and elegant tribute to the memory of his venerated friend, Mr. Lindsey, then recently deceased. After tracing the course of his public conduct, more especially with respect to the sacrifice to truth and conscience which was the chief means of making him the object of general attention, he proceeds: "If his public life was thus beneficial to mankind, he was not less endeared to all with whom he had any intercourse. Mild, gentle, affable and courteous, he strove to do good to all. Difference of opinion was not with him an occasion of strife. He lamented the injury those unhappy persons did to themselves, who will not take up the easy yoke of Christ; but burden themselves with the vain endeavour to reconcile the contradictory opinions of fallible men. His great aim was to call all men to the Scriptures; to exhort all men to make the Scriptures the rule of their faith and actions. To his last moments the Scriptures were his delight. In them he had been exercised from his earliest youth; and in his eighty-sixth year, they were the great object of his meditations. At an advanced age, he fell asleep in the Lord; for his departure was like the tranquil repose of infancy; and he left this world uttering his favourite sentiment,—'What God wills, is best.'"

Some of the speculations introduced into these volumes are not a little paradoxical; thus, in the volume for 1813, we find what professes to be a refutation of the Newtonian theory of gravitation, which he describes as

nothing better than a beautiful mathematical romance. The attentive reader, however, will not fail to perceive throughout, that he ascribes to Newton a doctrine which, even in the passages he himself quotes from the *Principia*, that illustrious philosopher repeatedly and expressly disclaims. If, as our author seems to suppose, the Newtonian theory required us to conceive of the earth on which we tread as endowed with a positive and inherent *power*, by which it acted on the moon, and on all other bodies at whatever distance; nay, to regard every particle of matter in the universe as actually pulling every other particle towards itself with a force depending on its mass and its distance, we might well be startled at so bold a postulate; for this would be no less than to endow every atom with consciousness and intelligence. Nevertheless it must be admitted that some writers, calling themselves Newtonians, have indulged themselves in language which amounts almost to this; but nothing like it is to be found in the *Principia*. All that Newton aims at is to investigate the laws which regulate the celestial forces in respect of their amount and their direction; and he finds, that a reciprocal attractive force prevailing among the different bodies which compose the solar system, varying as the quantity of matter *directly*, and as the square of the distance *inversely*, accounts for all the phenomena with the most minute and scrupulous exactness; and, moreover, that if we deviate in any respect from this law, the results are different from what is observed. He also finds

that this force, whatever be its nature, is the same with that in consequence of which a heavy body falls to the earth's surface. All this is capable of the most complete and rigid mathematical demonstration; and hence the *law* of the force which retains and directs the planets in their orbits must be that which Newton has assigned, and no other. But any further inquiries as to the *nature* of this force, from whence it arises, by what or by *whom* it is exercised, however interesting and curious they may be, form no part of the Newtonian theory.

Mr. Frend greatly interested himself, in the years 1806 and 1807, in the formation of the Rock Life Assurance Company, of which society he was appointed actuary; an office held by him until compelled by a severe illness, in 1826, to tender his resignation. This the Directors refused to accept till the following year, when upon his retirement the Company granted him an annuity of £800 for the remainder of his life, "as a particular testimony," to use the words of the resolution, "of the regard entertained of his independent and upright conduct since the first formation of the society."*

A singular fact is added by the writer of the article here quoted, on the authority of an original letter,—that Mr. Palmer, the projector of the mail coach system, having submitted his correspondence with government to Mr. Frend's inspection, the latter was induced to sift the

* Obituary of Mr. Frend, *Christian Reformer*, viii. 373.

subject completely ; and the result was, a conviction that the postage ought to be reduced to a uniform rate of two-pence or *one penny*. He drew up a statement, which was laid before a leading member of the then administration ; but no steps were taken in consequence. The idea was very probably thought too visionary to merit a moment's attention.

In the same year was established the Unitarian Fund, the leading object of which at its first projection was the promotion of missionary preaching on Unitarian principles. Under the auspices of this institution, the labours of Wright, Vidler, Campbell, and several others well qualified for this work, were devoted to the diffusion of Unitarian Christianity in various parts of the country where it had previously been little known, and were doubtless instrumental indirectly, to a very considerable extent, in promoting a knowledge of, and disposition to inquire after, the truth. The *direct* and *immediate* impression, however, produced by this mode of preaching, was far from being equal to what was at first anticipated by its more sanguine advocates ; and the resources of the institution were gradually diverted to other modes of furthering the same general object, by assisting poor congregations, printing and circulating tracts, and cheap editions of other useful publications, &c. An academy was afterwards set on foot at Hackney, under the direction of the Rev. R. Aspland, for the especial purpose of training up young men for this service ; where, without neglecting the more substantial attainments of theological learning,

it was proposed to make the accomplishments desirable in a popular preacher and missionary the principal object of study. Of both these institutions Mr. Frend was a warm and zealous supporter. "He was strongly in favour of extempore preaching, which he always recommended to the students of the academy, and to which while in the church he had accustomed himself, even, it has been said, when called to preach before the University. Sometimes he appeared in conversation to carry his dislike of what he called *book parsons* to the length of a prejudice."* Perhaps, as he was certainly accustomed to strong expressions, both in conversation and in writing, he may often have had ascribed to him more extreme opinions on various subjects than he really professed or intended to convey.

In 1808, Mr. Frend married the daughter of the Rev. F. Blackburne, vicar of Brignall, in Yorkshire, and eldest son of the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne.

Mr. Frend was a very frequent contributor to the old series of the *Monthly Repository*. His communications are too numerous to be particularized; they are very miscellaneous in their nature, but relate for the most part to various inquiries and speculations more or less connected with the Unitarian controversy. His own opinions were Unitarian in the strictest sense of the word; that is, he not only believed the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to be the only proper object of divine worship, but Jesus himself to be a man in all points

* *Christian Reformer*, ix. 605.

like unto his brethren, sin only excepted. Nevertheless, he protested repeatedly and in strong terms against the limitation of that title to the believers in the simple humanity of Christ; contending that all who confined their religious worship to the Father alone, though they might at the same time believe that Jesus had existed in an exalted state before his appearance on earth, were equally entitled to that denomination. He was one of those who declined to join the Unitarian Book Society at its first formation, in consequence of the introduction of the term "idolatrous" into its preamble; and also, as he himself informs us, because the terms in which the character and office of Christ are set forth, appeared to him to degrade the Saviour too nearly to a level with other prophets who had gone before him, and to describe him as the *messenger* only, and not as the appointed means or instrument through whose mediation we have obtained the dispensation of grace. He frequently recurs to this subject in his communications to the Repository, and occasionally censures his Unitarian brethren in pretty strong terms for what he calls their low and unworthy ideas of Christ. In several instances he lays great stress on certain views of the atonement held by himself, and, as he tells us, by some of his friends, particularly Mr. Tyrwhitt; and which he thinks distinguished them from the generality of Unitarians. But though repeatedly called upon to do so, he never very clearly explained what his peculiar ideas on this subject were; and there is reason to believe that the difference

was very much less than he imagined. Though he frequently uses the word atonement, he himself represents it as meaning nothing more than reconciliation,—a setting *at one*, such as might be effected by the intervention of a man, approved of God, by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him.

Perhaps Mr. Frend's doctrine on this point may not have been very dissimilar to that maintained by Dr. John Taylor, in his "Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement," as stated in the former volume of this work, p. 325; and to which it is conceived that Unitarians in general at the present day would not be disposed to object; though they would probably be more reserved and cautious than Mr. F. was wont to be, in adopting the glowing metaphors of St. Paul on this subject, founded on the sacrificial language and usages of the Jewish law. The most distinct account of his views of this question may probably be found in an obituary notice of Mr. Hammond (Mon. Rep. N.S. iv. 475), the following passage in which we have reason for considering as equally descriptive of the opinions of the writer and of his deceased friend:—

"He was a firm Unitarian Christian, meaning by the term Unitarian, a believer in one God in one person; by Christian, a believer in Christ, as his Saviour and Redeemer. He differed in the latter object of his faith from many Unitarians of the present day; as he maintained, in common with his friend Mr. Tyrwhitt, most strenuously, the doctrine of the atonement in the proper meaning of that word,

as given in the margin of the authorized Bible, —reconciliation. He lamented, indeed, that the word atonement was ever used, as it is liable to so much misinterpretation; and he never used it unless to vindicate himself from the insinuations of those who would confound him with those Unitarians who consider Christ simply in the character of a prophet and teacher, and a proof in himself of the doctrine of the resurrection. Eternal life, he used to say, is the gift of God *through* Jesus Christ our Lord; not merely that he taught this doctrine, but that eternal life is a gift bestowed in the manner chosen by the Giver, and this is through the medium of Christ who died for us and rose for our justification; that, as the disobedience of Adam was the means of the subsequent distress of the human race, so the obedience of Christ was the medium by which we are rescued from the fatal effects of the fall of the first parent, and rendered capable with him of a resurrection to future happiness. Our thanks are due, then, to the great Supreme in the first instance for his gift, and, in the next place, to our Lord and Master, Christ, through whom alone the possession of this gift is bestowed upon us. As a great majority of Unitarians in this country entertain a very different opinion on the character of our Saviour, it is but right that they should know, and indeed that other sects should know, that there are a few Unitarians who do not subscribe to the prevalent doctrine, but who are as tenacious of the strict unity of the Supreme as their brethren of the same denomination, though

they differ so widely from them on this great and important topic. This difference of opinion is little known to other sects ; for in conversation with several of them, and in repeating the glowing language of Paul, and the fervid metaphors of the blood of Christ washing away our sins, the writer has been repeatedly told that he is not a Unitarian, and in vain he protested that to him there is but one God the Father, and that as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."

The editor thinks it necessary to add to the above the following note : " In the obituary of J. Hammond, Esq., the respected writer has introduced some general assertions as to the faith of Unitarians, which the editor feels it his duty to disclaim, inasmuch as he knows of no Unitarians who do not hold " the doctrine of the atonement in the proper meaning of that word, namely, reconciliation," or who object to " repeating the glowing language of Paul, in the sense in which they believe it to have been used by the apostle." It might have been added, that many Unitarians would probably be more solicitous than our author and some of his friends appear to have been, to observe that caution in the use and application of scripture language recommended by Paley,* in cases where terms applied by the apostle to the then state of things, and to views and feelings which exist no longer, have been adopted by modern religionists as the suitable expression of sentiments of which the apostle, it is probable, knew nothing. On the whole, there is

* See his excellent Visitation Sermon on this subject.

reason to think that the difference on which he and his friends, Mr. Tyrwhitt and Mr. Hammond, laid so much stress, was more apparent than real.

On this question,—on the proper application of the term Unitarian, and on the practice of infant baptism,—very sharp discussions occur from time to time in the pages of the Repository, between our author and Mr. Belsham, conducted occasionally, we are constrained to say, in a style and temper which could not but be viewed with regret by those who respected and admired both these excellent and learned persons; and was sometimes ascribed by the general reader to some unpleasant personal misunderstanding, which we have good reason to believe had no existence.

Mr. Frend is also understood to have been the writer of the “Christian’s Survey of the Political World;”—a review of the principal public events of the month, with suitable reflections; which for many years formed a part of each number of the Monthly Repository. These articles are in general ably drawn up, and exhibit sentiments worthy of a Christian and a lover of civil and religious liberty. It is interesting now to look back upon them, if for no other purpose, to recall the feelings with which an enlightened and reflecting observer contemplated the events of those times as they were passing in review before him. The portions with which we should be the least disposed to sympathize, are those in which he seems almost disposed to idolize the Emperor of the French, as the great and illustrious hero of the age, in

terms which some of his readers found it difficult to reconcile with the patriotism of an Englishman, or with his own prevailing sentiments as a follower of the gospel of peace. This, however, is only an occasional ground of complaint; and as the writer has himself somewhere observed, an allowance must be made for the nature of the undertaking, which did not admit the application of the precept of Horace—"nonum prematur in annum." It would be unreasonable to expect a public writer to be perfectly uniform and consistent in his feelings and expressions, who is obliged to give utterance to his opinions on the spur of the moment, under the influence perhaps of public, of party, or even of personal excitement, on events which have as yet but imperfectly transpired, and of whose final results it is seldom possible to form even a probable conjecture.

In 1816, Mr. Frend published "The Interference of the British Legislature respecting the Slaves in the West India Islands deprecated; by a zealous Advocate for the Abolition of the Slave Trade." The emancipation of the negroes was a measure which, before its happy accomplishment, many genuine friends of the cause looked forward to with an alarm and apprehension which the event has shown to be groundless; and we cannot but think that if our author could have written on this important and interesting question, with the benefit of the last six years experience, many of the sentiments expressed in this pamphlet would have been considerably modified.

In the year 1826, as we have already stated,

a severe illness compelled him to resign the office of actuary to the Rock Life Assurance Company, and to retire from active life. His health however recovered, and he continued his mental employments with an activity very unusual at his age, until the beginning of the year 1840, when he was attacked by paralysis, under which he lingered with almost total loss of speech and motion, though with the smallest possible decay of mind or of memory, till Feb. 21, 1841, when "he closed a life which well deserves to be regarded as a splendid example of honesty in the pursuit of truth, and of undaunted determination in the assertion of all that conscience required."*

* Christian Reformer, ix. p. 462.

SAMUEL BOURN.

THIS name occupies an honourable place in the history of protestant dissent for three generations. The first nonconformist minister who bore it, was born at Derby, in 1648. His uncle, Mr. Robert Seddon, was ejected in 1662 from the rectory of Langley, in Derbyshire; and afterwards became the first minister of the Presbyterian congregation at Bolton, in Lancashire. By him, Mr. Bourn was sent to Emanuel College, Cambridge; where he remained till 1672, but without taking any degree, not being satisfied with the oaths and declarations then (as now) required. His tutor at College, Mr. Richardson, from a letter of his addressed to Mr. Bourn on the proper mode of conducting religious inquiries, inserted by Dr. Toulmin in his memoirs of the Bourn family, appears to have been a remarkable man, considerably in advance of his age in his views of the great questions connected with the right and duty of free inquiry; a man, concerning whom we should have been glad if it were possible to learn more.

After several removals, Mr. Bourn settled at Calne, in Wiltshire, where he discharged the pastoral duties for sixteen years with great acceptance and success. From thence, in 1698, he removed to Bolton, as successor to his

uncle, Mr. Seddon ; where he continued during the remainder of his life, and died in 1719. His religious opinions seem to have been of the class styled moderate Calvinism ; but devoid of any bigotry or censoriousness towards those who differed from him. His talents as a preacher and minister are said to have been considerable ; but he published little or nothing in his life-time. After his death, his son published a small volume, entitled "Several Sermons preached by the late Reverend Mr. Samuel Bourn." The subjects are, I. The Transforming Vision of Christ in the Future State, from 1 John iii. 2. II. The Believer's Hope of this Transforming Vision, the Reason and Motive of Real Holiness in the Present State, from 1 John iii. 3. Making a slight allowance for certain doctrinal views which we might not approve, and for the minute divisions and scholastic arrangement suitable to the taste of those times, (which however serve to illustrate the complete, and as it were *exhaustive* view, which the preacher had taken of his subject,) they give a very favourable impression of the piety and talents of the author.

His son Samuel, the principal subject of the present article, was born at Came, in 1689, and having received his preparatory education at the grammar-school in Bolton, pursued his academical studies under the direction of Mr. Chorlton and Mr. Coningham at Manchester ; after which he settled, in 1711, with a small society at Crook, near Kendal, in Westmoreland. Here he remained for nine years, in the service of a small but attached congregation,

with a portion of which he soon afterwards contracted a more permanent and very happy family alliance.

At this period, Mr. B. does not appear to have abandoned the impressions resulting from his early education, further than was implied in the refusal to bind himself by subscription to any human formulary. The Westminster confession of faith was then the received standard among the orthodox dissenters of that district; but he had already formed too correct an estimate of the just principles of religious liberty to place himself under any obligation or restriction, either express or implied, as to the result of the inquiries in which he might afterwards engage. The consequence appears to have been, that several of the ministers in his neighbourhood refused to concur in his ordination; a mark of their displeasure which probably gave him very little uneasiness, except on their own account. At all events, he was not deterred by it from seeking, in a spirit of perfect independence, and in the only quarter whose authority he acknowledged, for that further light which might enable him to decide for himself on various doctrinal questions then the subjects of warm and active discussion. The writings of Whiston and of Clarke at this period directed a large share of attention, especially among the Presbyterian dissenters, to the Trinitarian controversy; and Mr. Bourn, after impartially studying the principal disputants on both sides of the controversy, examined the Scriptures on the points in question, with care and diligence. The result was, a conviction of

the supremacy of God the Father, as the only proper object of religious worship. He often afterwards declared, that next to his Bible, nothing did more to confirm him in Dr. Clarke's scheme, than the replies of his opponents to his principles and objections, and the insufficient defence they made of their own. Further than this he does not seem to have proceeded; but continued to the last to profess nearly the same modification of the Arian system, which was maintained by Chandler, Benson, and the other leading divines of the *liberal* school of dissenters of that day.* The other distinguishing doctrines of Calvinistic orthodoxy he rejected very decidedly, and frequently contended against them with great earnestness in his own peculiar, forcible, and energetic style.

In 1720, Mr. Bourn removed to Tunley, near Wigan, and, in 1727, to Chorley. In 1732, he was invited to succeed the Rev. Edward Brodhurst as one of the ministers of the New Meeting at Birmingham. A short time before this, the congregation at Coseley, near Wolverhampton, had united itself to the New Meeting Society, so as to be served by the same ministers; and in pursuance of this arrangement, Mr. Bourn took up his residence at Coseley, as pastor of that society, in conjunction with Mr.

* We accord to them this epithet, not from any disposition to affix an uncharitable stigma of illiberality upon others, but because it appears to us to be a just description of the spirit in which they not only exercised the right of free inquiry themselves, but freely conceded it to their fellow-disciples, whatever might be the conclusions to which it led them.

Pickard, who resided at Birmingham. In his letter accepting the invitation, is a minute and curious account of the plan of his journey from Chorley to Coseley, which is worth inserting, as illustrating the change which a century has made in matters of this kind :—" I propose to be in motion with my family on Wednesday morning, June 21, and shall try to reach Warrington by noon ; and wish the waggon from Coseley may be ready there by ten o'clock that day, prepared to load and travel the same afternoon towards Holmes Chapel, in order to reach Coseley, if it may be, on Friday, and there I shall choose to spend the first Lord's day. Mr. Higgison's, at the Pied Bull in Warrington, is the house to meet at. I have yet had no leisure to weigh my books and goods, but hope to reduce them within two tons, and bring them to Warrington in two carts or one waggon. Also I desire two single pads may be sent in halters for me and my wife ; I may perhaps sell my own mare. I expect my son from Glasgow with a little horse, and among us we shall relieve the little boys in the waggon."*

On settling at Coseley, Mr. Bourn applied himself with diligence and assiduity to the joint charge of his two congregations ; preaching at Coseley and Birmingham (twelve miles distant) on alternate Sundays, and devoting his more particular attention to the religious instruction of the rising generation. To his exertions in this department of his pastoral charge, there is good reason to think that the

* Toulmin's Memoirs, p. 180.

high character for liberality and intelligence which has ever since distinguished that society is in a considerable measure to be ascribed. For the benefit of this portion of his flock, he published, in the second year after his settlement among them, "The Young Christian's Prayer Book;" with a prefatory address to young persons on the obligation and importance of early devotion. In this address, he gives in the following words a judicious view of the nature, influence, and purpose of prayer, which is worthy of being inserted:—"Here I offer to your acceptance, my young friends, a few of my labours, wherein I have aimed, not only to assist your devotion, as the title imports, but also to lead your judgments into right apprehensions of God, and to regulate your lives; the former of which is the only foundation of religion, and the latter the only perfection of it; and prayer is only an effect of the former, and only a means of the latter. Now as the means are only valuable so far as they promote their proper end, you will hence see that all prayer as to you is lost, which does not make you live better; for God requires prayer, not for his own sake, but for your sake; to sweeten your tempers by conversing with himself, the best of beings, and fill you with benevolence; to correct your passions and bring them under the conduct of reason; and to amend your actions and carriage to all about you, in order to your becoming greater blessings and prepared for more grace. When prayer to God thus transforms young souls into his own image, it is devotion indeed;

when it has no such effect, it is a piece of dead formality." This publication was well received, and was doubtless eminently serviceable in promoting among those to whom it was addressed the cultivation of the early and habitual devotion, which it was the author's object and endeavour to inculcate.

With a similar view, he afterwards published "The Christian Family Prayer Book," a judicious and useful manual of domestic devotion; to which was prefixed a discourse, representing the reasonableness, beauty, pleasure, and usefulness of family religion. Both of these have since been frequently reprinted.

With the same laudable desire of promoting the religious education and improvement of the younger members of his flock, he assembled them for the purpose of catechetical exercises and lectures on the Lord's-day evenings. The instruction communicated in this way was doubtless important, and appears to have been highly valued, though it may perhaps be thought by some that the mode in which it was conveyed was occasionally open to criticism.

The arrangement of doctrinal and controversial treatises, in the form of question and answer, seems to have been a favourite mode of composition with Mr. Bourn; for we have from his pen not merely Catechisms properly so called, on such branches of elementary religious instruction as are usually communicated in this method to children, but extended and elaborate treatises on various doctrinal and controversial subjects. His first work in this form is entitled

“Lectures to Children and Young People, in a catechetical method.” This consists of three parts: 1. a short Doctrinal Catechism, arranged under five heads or leading propositions, which he thinks contain all that wise and moderate Christians will judge essentials in religion, or fundamental doctrines. The second is a short sketch or outline of Scripture History, on which the catechist may make suitable enlargements, both historical and practical. The third catechism, entitled “A Summary of Doctrinal and Practical Religion,” is carried out into a much greater fulness of detail; comprising the sources and general principles of revealed religion, the duties of man to God,—to his neighbour,—and to himself,—the general properties of holiness and virtue,—the nature of repentance,—and the motives supplied by the gospel to the cultivation of religion and virtue. To the whole is appended, “The Assembly’s Shorter Catechism, revised and rendered fitter for general use, by the Rev. James Strong.” This last piece was intended to reconcile, if possible, with his open and decided rejection of many of its peculiar doctrines, the continued use of this manual, which it seems he did not altogether reject, in compliance with the wishes of some who sought to retain it, more through the influence of habit and prejudice than a full approval of its principles. In using it, however, he did not hesitate to protest, as became an honest man, against those statements from which he dissented. He also expressed his dissent more publicly, in “An Examination of the Sixth Answer of the

Assembly's Catechism ;" which involved him in a controversy with a Mr. Sloss, minister of an Independent congregation at Nottingham.

Mr. Bourn afterwards published, in a similar form, but without his name, "The Protestant Catechism ; or, a Vindication of the Protestant Reformation : containing a brief account of the original of Popery, presumptions against it, a refutation of its doctrinal errors, a display of the unscriptural idolatrous worship of the Romish church, its immoralities in principle and practice, and the wicked methods of propagating its superstition ; the pleas of the Papists in behalf of their religion, with their objections against that of the Reformed properly considered. The whole adapted to the service of Protestant youth, and intended as an assistant to their instructors." On examining the work thus described in the title-page, while we observe much to approve, and concur on the whole with the general principles of the writer, we are not surprised to find many exaggerations, and many charges repeated from preceding authors on the same side, without much pains having been taken to enquire into their correctness, or the answers which have been given to them. In short, it is impossible not to perceive that it is throughout a *one-sided* statement, which the pupil is instructed to receive implicitly on the unsuspected authority of his teacher. We make no doubt that there are "Catholic Catechisms" in plenty in which Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer (to say nothing of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth), cut to the full as sorry a figure as the pope and cardinals do here.

To this publication was added, in the following year, the "Protestant Dissenters' Catechism; or, a Vindication of the Principles and Practice of Protestant Dissenters: containing a brief history of the Dissenters; the hardships of ministerial conformity; reasons for separating from the Church of England peculiar to the laity; a defence of the rights of conscience, private judgment, and the toleration of peaceable Dissenters. Answers to several objections commonly urged; designed and fitted by way of question and answer for the use of dissenting parents, to assist them in instructing their children concerning the true grounds of their nonconformity, as well as to furnish the unlearned in general with a fair and plain view of the controversy. By a lover of truth and liberty."

The catechetical method, proceeding by question and answer, where the substance of the knowledge communicated is comprised in the answers which are required to be committed to memory by the pupils, is a very common mode of religious instruction, but is by no means universally eligible. There may be some cases in which it is desirable to imbue the minds of young children with the elements of certain branches of knowledge, or rather to familiarize them in good time with the *words* employed to express this knowledge, before they are capable of fully comprehending the propositions themselves. This is the only ground on which any rational vindication can be attempted of the antiquated practice of setting boys to learn the rules of grammar in Latin, still pursued we

believe in some of our public schools ; and the same remark may be applied to most of the catechisms usually put into the hands of young children. In both cases, for a time it is a mere exercise of the memory ; but as their ideas become more complete and distinct, the things signified are gradually associated with the signs ; and real knowledge may at length be in this manner deeply impressed upon the mind. But it is by a sort of mechanical process, and without any adequate perception of the evidence by which its truth is ascertained and established. It is obvious, too, that not only truth, but error, is often instilled in this way ; and when once introduced, may sometimes give a tinge to the ideas and prevalent feelings of the mind, which all the streams of the pure fountain may afterwards be insufficient to remove. Hence this mode of inculcating certain principles into the youthful mind implicitly relying on its instructor, if practised at all, can be recommended only to a very limited extent ; and the sooner the faculties of judgment and reasoning can be suitably addressed, so as to lead the pupil not merely to give an unexamining assent to certain forms of words, but to perceive their import and their evidence, to know both what he believes and why he believes it, the better.

In the treatises which have suggested these remarks, though much curious and valuable information is often conveyed (along with a variety of statements which it may perhaps be found not always so easy to substantiate), we cannot say much for the taste displayed in the

form in which it is presented ; and most persons will be inclined to think that a regular didactic method, where principles are laid down as from authority,—or a distinct and candid exposition of the opposing arguments, where the propositions recommended are matters of controversy and debate,—would be both more pleasing and better adapted to accomplish the author's purpose. To each section of such a treatise, it may be well to add a series of appropriate questions *without answers*, serving to exercise at once the pupil's memory and his judgment ; but by no means intended to supersede that extempore and spontaneous examination which is after all the best exercise of the faculties of all the parties concerned. In this last mode of promoting the improvement of his youthful pupils, there is reason to believe that Mr. Bourn greatly excelled. His mode of explanation was easy and intelligible, and his manner peculiarly kind, encouraging, and familiar.

Mr. Bourn's talents and active disposition soon made it evident that he was well qualified to take a leading part in the affairs of the dissenting body in the district where he was now settled. His influence among his brethren in the ministry, and in the congregations with which he was more immediately connected, was accordingly very considerable ; and there can be little doubt that he was mainly instrumental in diffusing the theological views which he had embraced, and in accelerating the deviation from the doctrinal standards of a former age, which had already made itself very manifest in the general body of the presbyterian dissenters.

Whenever any disposition betrayed itself to insist on a profession of strict conformity to these standards, or in any other way to exercise an inquisitorial spirit either towards ministers or people, he was ready to come forward in the cause of liberty and free inquiry, which he defended with ability and success. He was remarkable for acuteness in argument, for ready expression both in speech and writing, and for an aptness of repartee and satirical humour, which must have made him a somewhat formidable opponent. On some occasions, he appears to have allowed this latter talent to carry him (at least in the pulpit) further than our notions of propriety and good taste would authorize. Of this tendency some symptoms are plainly observable in a sermon preached Nov. 5, 1735, and afterwards published, entitled "Popery a Craft, and Popish Priests the Chief Craftsmen;" in which he exposes the abuses of popery, and also the spirit of popery wherever it may prevail, in a strain of lively satire, and now and then almost a levity of expression, which must have excited a smile in his audience.* But his general style of preaching seems to have been highly impressive and rousing, if we may judge by the specimens of it which have appeared before the public. A very remarkable example of this will be found in a sermon preached at the yearly meeting of ministers at Dudley, in 1738, on the true Christian way of striving for

* This sermon was afterwards reprinted in that curious and valuable collection, entitled "A Cordial for Low Spirits," vol. iii. p. 55—76.

the faith of the gospel, from Phil. i. 27, 28 ; which is admirable for its spirit-stirring style, as well as for the judicious view which it gives, both of what the faith of the gospel consists in, and how men ought to strive for this faith *together*; that is, with one mind, one soul, one affection, —one and the same calm, wise, brotherly temper, as becometh the scholars of Jesus Christ. Under the first of these divisions he speaks very unreservedly of the leading doctrines of modern orthodoxy, as forming no part of the faith of the gospel for which we are to strive. “To substitute any human composures, whether articles, creeds, catechisms, or confessions, instead of the gospel, as a rule of trial,—or to annex them to the gospel as necessary to be believed,—this is to give up the Scripture sufficiency, it is to return back into the tents of popery, and will in time sacrifice the cause of Christ to infidels. Let the Jewish Sanhedrim try Christ and his apostles, not by the oracles of the Old Testament, but by their traditions; let the priests of Rome try men’s faith by the Council of Trent, instead of the New Testament; but let not protestants, let not protestant dissenters so far forget themselves, so wholly give up all their great principles, as to set up any human composure as an idol, and then let loose their anger against those who will not bow down to it.”

His account of the practices, which (however prevalent they may be) form no part of the Christian method of striving for the faith, is very candid and plain-spoken, and was evidently intended for some of his hearers to take

to themselves. "My friends," said he, "as I study the glory of our own body, and our advance toward Christian perfection, I hope you will allow me to deal freely with you. If you can justify exposing, abusing any upright Christian brother, for believing what upon inquiry he taketh to be sacred, useful truth; if you can justify calling him by any unpopular, odious names; if you can justify shyness towards his person, or any ill office to his interest, credit and usefulness; I will undertake to justify all the ill manners, all the abusive names, all the barbarous and bloody executions of Jews, of pagans, and of papists against innocent Christians, in every age since the name was known in the world. Let us then all agree to quit the camp of the enemy, the camp of antichrist. This we have not done, till we allow every man, every private Christian, every Christian minister, full liberty to use his own judgment, his own conscience, his own eyes, in understanding his Bible as well as he can; and till we have learnt to think no worse of a Christian brother for differing in opinion from us, while he seeks the truth as honestly as we can pretend to do. Union in this one point, as it strikes at the root of popery, so it will at once put an end to all church tyranny, persecution, and imposition, and extinguish all angry contentions and passionate disputes about religion. And I am much mistaken, if any other remedy will do it."

These, and other appeals in the same honest and manly spirit, were received, we doubt not, by most of his hearers with a disposition and

sincere desire to apply them as they were meant. Some, however, it appears took offence; partly at the manner in which the preacher treated some of their favourite doctrines, and more especially at his denunciations of the temper which their own consciences told them they were too apt to indulge against those who impugned them. The offence thus conceived, gave rise to some public "Strictures," which drew from Mr. Bourn, "Remarks on a Pretended Answer to a Sermon preached at Dudley, &c."

We have given a more particular account of this sermon and of the impression it produced, because it may serve to exemplify the state of opinion and feeling in the English presbyterian churches, during the period of what may not improperly be called their *transition* state. To what extent the doctrines commonly called orthodox were at any time universally prevalent among them, has of late been the subject of much controversy; but there cannot be a doubt that the greater learning and the more inquiring spirit of their ministers, and their own more free and liberal constitution, introduced from the first a tendency to a gradual progress; which advanced in some cases by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, in others by a more marked and rapid change; accelerated perhaps, as in the case of Mr. Bourn, by the bolder, more energetic character of a particular minister, who might sometimes influence and give the tone to an entire district. That the majority in most of the congregations were in a great measure prepared to go along with their mi-

nisters in such honest and unreserved declarations as these, is quite evident; though the old leaven was not as yet entirely worked out. A minority were alarmed and drew back; and some, as we have seen, expressed their dissatisfaction by such language and conduct, as we might naturally expect to be prompted by a persuasion that none could be saved who did not adopt their peculiar views. But there is not the slightest intimation that any of these parties ever dreamt of appealing to the Court of Chancery to expel their heretical brethren from their chapels and endowments, merely because they had exercised the liberty of protestants and of dissenters in inquiring and judging for themselves; notwithstanding that there were in all probability many of the original founders still living, who could have given testimony, if required, as to their own views and intentions in contributing to the first formation of the society.

About this time Mr. Bourn published two Dialogues between a Churchman and a Baptist, (so called); in which the latter is made to profess the highest Antinomian Calvinism, while the former, who speaks the sentiments of the author, exposes in strong terms the absurdity of these views, their inconsistency with Scripture, and the immoral tendency of the inferences fairly deducible from them. In doing this, however, he is made to lay down principles and advance arguments not very consistent with his assumed character; and it is clear enough that the opponent, *speaking for himself*, would not

have failed to silence him, by contrasting his doctrines with the articles of his church.

From several intimations in these dialogues, it appears that the prominent part which Mr. Bourn had taken in the vindication of free inquiry, and liberal opinions in opposition to narrow-minded prejudice and bigotry, had subjected him to much calumny and abuse, and to frequent and gross misrepresentations of his real principles. He also became a mark for petty persecution of a different kind. In several instances he found it necessary to defend himself from the harassing and troublesome proceedings of certain individuals who were disposed to make the less satisfactory state of the law at that time, with relation to dissenting ministers, an engine of personal annoyance. He was twice brought before the quarter sessions,—on what charge is not stated; but probably on the ground of his not having subscribed the doctrinal articles of the Church of England; and on one occasion, as it would seem out of pure spite, he was summoned to shew cause before the magistrates why he should not be removed to his former settlement, as a person likely to become chargeable to the parish. He defended himself from these foolish attempts at a persecution which the authorities in general were now grown too wise to encourage, with equal spirit and success.

In 1745, Mr. Bourn took a part in the ordination of the well known and highly respected Mr. Job Orton, at Shrewsbury. His charge on this occasion was published, and contains a

very judicious summary of the duties of a Christian minister, distinctly and concisely laid down, and well enforced by such motives and sanctions as are suitably offered to the attention of a preacher of the gospel, and the servant of a Master whose kingdom is not of this world. Mr. Orton's views of disputed doctrines approached considerably nearer than those of Mr. Bourn to the standard of reputed orthodoxy; but though differing on these points, they were cordially agreed on others, which they both regarded as of still greater importance, and always cherished for each other a high mutual friendship and esteem.

In 1751, a pressing and unanimous invitation was addressed to Mr. Bourn by the religious society at Bolton, which in a former generation had been served by his father. Pleasing recollections of the scene of his early years, a high estimate of the importance of the station, and of the opportunities of usefulness which it would afford him,—its vicinity to many friends of his youth, and likewise to two of his sons, who by this time were settled in the ministry in that neighbourhood,—added to some misgivings which beset him as to the efficacy and acceptableness of his services at Birmingham and Coseley, induced him to listen to this overture, and for a time he hesitated. It quickly appeared however that the doubts he had entertained of the place which he occupied in the estimation of his present flock, were in a great measure groundless. The most earnest and affectionate addresses were immediately presented to him from both societies; which, backed by an ur-

gent remonstrance from his friend Mr. Orton, decided him to continue for the remainder of his declining years in the station where the more important part of his active life had been spent.

It may readily be supposed, that a man of Mr. Bourn's ardent and active temper, eagerly seeking after improvement in the best things himself, and looking in others for the same spirit and zeal with which his own breast was animated, would estimate too highly the fruits to be expected from his labours; and when the actual or apparent result fell short of this standard, he might experience a sort of reaction, and give way to feelings of disappointment beyond what was reasonable. An energy and zeal inferior to his own, would appear to him to savour of coldness and indifference; and he might be tempted to say in his haste, "Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"—He continued to occupy the station which he had so long adorned by his active and important labours, till March, 1754, when he was attacked by a paralytic disorder, which seized him in the pulpit at Coseley, and in a few days terminated his ministry and his life. Thus did death, as his worthy colleague expressed it on this mournful occasion, extinguish one of the most useful lights of the churches.*

We have no evidence that Mr. Bourn was peculiarly remarkable for extensive and varied learning, though he took a respectable place

* See Funeral Sermon for Mr. Bourn, by the Rev. S. Blyth, of Birmingham.

among his brethren of the presbyterian ministry, in an age when this denomination of dissenters was distinguished for the stress which it laid on such accomplishments. But his *forte* lay in the activity and energy of his mind,—in his downright honesty going straight to his purpose, without fearing the face of man, and in his fervent habitual devotion, which made every thing else subservient to the cultivation and diffusion of practical religion. These qualities of his mind and heart added greatly to the influence which he doubtless exercised, in drawing the favourable attention of his hearers to those points of doctrine in respect of which he differed both from his predecessors and from the majority of professing Christians in his own age.

In the year after Mr. Bourn's decease, a posthumous volume appeared, entitled "Twenty Sermons on the most serious and practical Truths of the Christian Religion." In speaking of this volume, Mr. Orton ranks the author with Dr. Jortin, "as saying the most spiritual, pertinent, and excellent things, in the plainest and most familiar manner; so that the hearers of the lowest understandings might take them in."

Of Mr. Bourn's numerous family, two sons followed their father's profession, and became useful and acceptable dissenting ministers. Joseph, born in 1713, was educated at Glasgow. He settled first at Congleton, and afterwards at Hindley, near Wigan, in Lancashire. He left no memorial behind him through the medium of the press; but is understood to have been a valuable minister, and his memory was

long affectionately cherished by an attached congregation. He died in 1765.*

The second son, Samuel, born in 1714, followed his brother to Glasgow, which was at that time rapidly advancing in celebrity as a place of liberal theological education, under the auspices of Professors Hutcheson and Simpson. In 1742, he settled at Rivington, near Bolton, from whence he removed to Norwich, in 1754, to become co-pastor with the celebrated Dr. John Taylor. In 1752, he had preached a sermon at Manchester before the provincial meeting of ministers, "On the Rise, Progress, Corruption, and Declension of the Christian Religion, and on the means of its Restoration and Advancement." The sermon was afterwards printed, though without the author's name; a deviation from the usual custom for which it is not easy to account, as there is certainly nothing either in the matter or style which he had any reason to be ashamed of. A

* In Toulmin's *Memoirs of Bourn* it is mentioned (p. 121), that "this gentleman left a widow with six children (the oldest between ten and eleven), and near her confinement with a seventh. Two died in their infancy; three are now living (A. D. 1808) to perpetuate their parents' virtues, and to cherish their memory with respect: the eldest, Mrs. Jones, married to Samuel Jones, Esq., of Manchester; the youngest, Mrs. Darbyshire, married to Mr. James Darbyshire, of Bolton-le-Moors; and Mr. Joseph Bourn, who is also resident in that town." The last-mentioned gentleman left but one daughter, with whom the family name of Bourn became extinct, but who inherited, with the name, the religious principles and the intellectual and moral tastes of English presbyterian dissent, and who is now married to the Rev. Edward Tagart, the present respected minister of the Unitarian congregation assembling in Little Portland Street, London.

few years after his settlement at Norwich, he published by subscription two volumes of sermons, of which it is not too much to say that they have been long in high estimation, and must continue to be held in esteem, so long as elevated ideas of the Divine nature and government, and a rational and well-founded devotion shall exist in the mind of man. One of these discourses attracted considerable attention, from its containing a powerful argument in favour of the belief that the future punishment of the wicked is to terminate in final destruction. He afterwards maintained the same argument with much ability in a Letter to Dr. Chandler, who had publicly impugned this doctrine. When compared with the doctrine of eternal torments as commonly received, this opinion must be admitted to present a milder and less repulsive view of the Divine government; but it is exposed to difficulties of its own which appear to us altogether insurmountable; and we are even disposed to think that the opposite doctrine is capable of being modified, and has been actually modified by some of its most enlightened advocates, in such a manner as to be fully reconcileable to the most rational and scriptural views of the Divine justice and mercy. Two additional volumes of sermons were published by our author in 1764, on the parables of our Saviour; and two more in 1777. About this period his increasing infirmities obliged him to retire from public duties; but his life was prolonged, though in a state of great mental and bodily decay, for many years. He died in 1796, in the eighty-third year of his age.

WILLIAM TURNER.

THIS excellent and venerable person, the only son of the Rev. John Turner, was born Dec. 5, 1714, at Preston, in Lancashire, where his father was at that time the minister of a congregation of presbyterian dissenters. At this period, immediately subsequent to the accession of the house of Hanover, the dissenters were everywhere among the warmest and most zealous friends of the new dynasty, not only from an attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty which had placed it on the throne, but in consequence of the critical state of public affairs, which had recently brought the privileges secured to them by the Act of Toleration into extreme jeopardy. Hence, in the following year, when the first rebellion broke out, and the Pretender at the head of his army of Scottish highlanders advanced into Lancashire, the presbyterian dissenters of that county, who have always been a numerous and powerful body, exerted themselves with great vigour and activity in support of the new order of things. Several ministers, and among the rest Mr. Turner, marshalled the young men of their congregations into partizan corps, which were, in several instances, of considerable service in the irregular warfare, for which their knowledge of the country made them particu-

larly suitable. In one of his nocturnal excursions in this unwonted employment, Mr. Turner was fortunate enough to fall in with and secure a prisoner of consequence, the confidential servant of one of the principal Roman Catholic gentry, who was going from his master with some important intelligence to the rebels. For this service he received the public thanks of the commanding officer, General Willes.

Mr. Turner married Mrs. Hannah Holder, a widow, daughter of William Chorley, Esq., of Preston. From another daughter of this gentleman is descended the Rev. Richard Astley, now of Shrewsbury. Of the same family was the Rev. Josiah Chorley, of Norwich, author of a curious metrical Index to the Bible.

Very few of Mr. Turner's papers remain in the possession of his descendants. One of these few is the confession of his faith which he drew up on the occasion of his ordination, from which he appears to have been a Calvinist of the most strict and rigid form; a profession which he is understood to have maintained through life. This ultra-orthodoxy seems to have been attended in him with a somewhat stern and arbitrary disposition, which rendered him the object of fear as well as of attachment to his nearest connexions. He was afterwards settled at Rivington, at Wirksworth, in Derbyshire, and finally at Knutsford, in Cheshire, at which last place he died at a comparatively early age, in 1737.

William Turner received his early education, partly at the public grammar school at Rivington, in Lancashire, but principally under Mr.

Isaac Antrobus, a very eminent school-master at Knutsford. From hence, in 1732, he was removed to the academy at Findern, near Derby, conducted by the eminent and learned Dr. Ebenezer Latham, of whom we have given, we regret to say, a scanty and imperfect account, but the best that could be obtained, in the former volume of this work. Here, if not before, he probably found reason to enter himself in a different school of theology from that in which he had been early trained under his father's instructions. At Findern he continued four years, and then removed for one season to the University of Glasgow, where he had the advantage of attending the lectures of the celebrated Dr. Francis Hutcheson, and was also happy in the friendly notice of Mr. John Simpson; who, though at that time suspended from the public discharge of the duties of his office as Professor of Divinity, by the too successful efforts of bigotry and superstition, continued to direct, in a more private manner, the theological studies of those young men who had the courage to apply to him, or who, like Mr. Turner, stood in no fear of any human authority which should restrain them from resorting to any quarter where they could obtain the most real and substantial improvement. To such pupils, Mr. Simpson was probably more useful in this way of easy familiar conversation, than he could have been in the public discharge of his office before the University at large.

On his return to England, in 1737, Mr. Turner "offered himself as a candidate for the ministry," according to the forms then observed,

but now long disused, among the presbyterians in Lancashire and Cheshire; and, having been examined in the languages, philosophy, and divinity, he was "approved and allowed to preach as a candidate," by an instrument bearing date August 2, 1737, and signed *Charles Owen*, Moderator, *Samuel Eaton*, Scribe.

The custom of which the above is an example, was probably a remnant derived from the times of the Commonwealth; at which period, as is well known, the presbyterian forms of church government were carried into effect to a greater extent in that district than in any other part of England. It is needless to observe, that whatever it may have been originally, it was no longer accompanied by any substantial power, acknowledged either by the candidates or by congregations, tending to restrict the former from exercising their gifts *without* this license, or the latter from making choice of any minister whose services they were desirous to procure. At the same time it is probable that there still existed, not a *power* exactly, but an *influence*, arising partly from the more intimate union and frequent intercourse of the churches, —partly from the personal authority maintained by some leading ministers who were looked up to on account of their own eminent qualities,—and in some measure, also, from the higher notions which then prevailed of a certain indescribable efficacy, supposed to be communicated to the ministerial functions by the process of ordination. This last notion *we* should be disposed to reject as a superstitious prejudice, deriving no authority either from reason or from

Scripture; but setting this aside, it is reasonable to believe that the welfare of religious societies and the edification of their members would be to a certain degree promoted, by the custom of limiting the field of selection in their choice of ministers to such as had gone through certain previous trials, and whose qualifications, not as to "soundness in the faith," but as to literary and theological attainments and good moral character were duly attested by parties whose competency to judge was generally acknowledged. If the high literary character which has been for the most part maintained by the ministers of the presbyterian denomination be thought an object of any importance, as extending their influence and usefulness, or the general respectability of the body at large, a practice which tended to promote this object must appear to have been to that extent beneficial. If, however, it could not be carried into actual operation by the mere force of public opinion, without ascribing to recognized examiners or presbyteries a controul over the proceedings of distinct religious societies, then we are prepared to admit that one evil, or rather the *possibility* of one evil, would be checked only by the *certainty* of a much greater evil; and are the less disposed to regret that the practice gradually degenerated into a mere form, and was finally abandoned altogether.

Soon after receiving this formal recognition of his qualifications, Mr. Turner was invited, on the removal of Dr. Eaton to Nottingham, to succeed him in the charge of his former congregation and school at Allostock, near Knutsford.

In this retired situation he had an opportunity of making very important additions to that stock of sound learning, which qualified him to appear in future life with such advantage as a preacher and a critic. At this early period, however, he had gained such just reputation, that a person of good judgment was accustomed to say, that having occasion frequently to travel through that part of the country, he always made a point of spending the Lord's day at Allostock. As an instructor of youth, his talents soon rose into high estimation. In classical learning he was no mean proficient, and always took much pleasure in the pursuit and cultivation of it, though his chief study was to apply his philological attainments to the elucidation of the sacred writings; a work in which he greatly excelled. Several very elegant specimens of his Latin epistolary style remain in his correspondence with his sons; which shew him to have possessed an accurate knowledge, and considerable facility in the use, of that language. He also occasionally amused a leisure hour in poetical composition, and several pieces of his which have been preserved, are sufficient to shew, that if his serious thoughts and labours had not been devoted to objects which he no doubt considered as much more deserving the attention of a Christian scholar, he might have attained a distinguished reputation in this department of literature.

About the year 1746, having had the misfortune to break a blood-vessel in his lungs, he was obliged for a time to relinquish his profession as a minister. For the benefit of medical

advice, he removed from Allostock to Ollerton, a village nearer Knutsford; where he continued to pay such attention to a few pupils as his state of health would permit. By a rigid attention to regimen, assisted by occasional removals, during the summer seasons, to Matlock and Bristol, he so far regained his health, as to venture, about the year 1754, to resume his favourite employment as a teacher of religion. He now accepted an invitation to settle at Congleton, in Cheshire, where it soon appeared that the years in which he had been laid aside from the ministry had not been lost; but that the leisure which his indisposition rendered necessary, had been usefully applied, not only to the further increase of his knowledge, but also to the correction of his taste, and the formation of that pure simplicity and plainness of style which so eminently characterize his pulpit compositions, and which were so particularly suited to his gentle, affectionate, and persuasive manner. In both these respects he was probably much assisted by the intimacy which he maintained during this period, with his valued friend and neighbour, the excellent Mr. John Holland, of Mobberley; a young minister, whose early death prevented his arriving at the celebrity which he would otherwise in all probability have acquired, but whose attainments in theology and general literature were of a very superior character.*

* Mr. Holland was born about 1720, at Mobberley, near Knutsford, where his father resided on his own estate, highly respected and esteemed by all who knew him. He received his grammar learning from Mr. Antrobus, of

At Congleton he for a short time continued his school, but soon resigned it to the Rev. Edward Harwood, afterwards well known in

Knutsford, under whom he was thoroughly grounded in the Latin and Greek languages, and laid the foundation of that purity and elegance of English style, for which his sermons, particularly those on intemperance, are so remarkable. He afterwards pursued his academical studies with a view to the Christian ministry under Dr. Rotheram, of Kendal, and from thence removed to Glasgow, where he greatly distinguished himself. On his return from Scotland, he was not hasty to settle with any particular congregation; but, through the indulgence of his father, was enabled still further to prosecute his studies at home, with a constant view to the more creditable and useful exercise of his ministry at a later period; at the same time, readily accepting occasional engagements for the accommodation of neighbouring ministers or congregations. The longest of these was at the High Pavement, Nottingham, as assistant to Dr. Samuel Eaton. Dr. Benson was very desirous to have prevailed with him to settle in London. At length, however, in 1751, he accepted an invitation from the congregation of presbyterian dissenters at Chowbent, in Lancashire. But, just before his removal thither, he was carried off by a violent fever, in the 31st year of his age. In compliance with the wishes of the younger part of the Nottingham congregation, he had published, the year before his death, "Two Sermons on the Folly and Guilt of Intemperance;" in which he may fairly be said to have exhausted every argument which can be drawn, either from reason or revelation, against that debasing vice. That part of the second sermon, in which he traces the intemperate man through every relation of domestic and social life, and shows how unfit he renders himself for every one of them, is particularly striking. After his death, at the earnest request of his numerous friends, the family were induced to publish two volumes of his sermons and prayers, both of which he always made a practice of preparing and committing to writing with equal study and care. They met with a very favourable reception, and have been long out of print. Several of them have been reprinted in various selections, particularly in the "Protestant System," and in the "English Preacher." Next to the general praise of excellent sense expressed in elegant language,

the learned world for many valuable contributions both to theological and classical literature. This very able, though unfortunate man, than whom however few could be more competent to judge, in a short memoir of his life inserted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (Nov. 1793), speaks of Mr. Turner as "one of the most ingenious and learned men he ever knew." Here also he commenced an acquaintance with the Rev. Joseph Priestley, at that time minister of a small congregation of dissenters at Namptwich.

In the year 1758, Mr. Turner married Mary, daughter of Mr. Holland, of Mobberley, and sister to the Mr. Holland above mentioned. She was of a temper and disposition peculiarly suited to his own, so that their connexion was in every respect a happy one. She died on the 31st of October, 1784, leaving two sons.

In April, 1761, he was invited to succeed the Rev. John Aldred, as minister of the congregation of protestant dissenters assembling in Westgate Chapel, Wakefield. This congregation, though far from being the most numerous, yet, from the wealth and influence of several of its leading families, was at that time perhaps the most considerable in the north of England; and his connexion with so important a society naturally gave him a station, both as a minister, and in society at large, which his learning and

the sermons of Mr. Holland are particularly remarkable for the skill with which their author has interwoven, and as it were amalgamated, the finest passages of the best Greek and Roman writers with his own compositions; instances of which may be found in almost every sermon, but particularly in those on Friendship and Old Age.—*Monthly Repository*, O. S. v. 327.

talents, and his amiable and conciliating manners, peculiarly qualified him to fill. In this mutually satisfactory connexion he remained for more than thirty-one years, till the increasing infirmities of advanced age compelled him to retire from active life and public duties. He was the object of uniform respect from all who knew him, and secured the cordial attachment and affection of his flock, not only by the excellence of his public ministrations, but by his attention to more private duties, and especially by the edifying example, displayed in his life, of the Christian precepts which he inculcated. His manner as a preacher, though not aiming at the more showy graces of oratory, was simple, earnest, and impressive; deriving its principal power over the hearts of his hearers from the conviction which attended it, that what he said proceeded from the heart of the speaker. His manner in prayer is described as having been particularly excellent; he seldom made use of notes, and his prayers were probably in general extemporaneous, though on various public or special occasions he evidently prepared his devotional services with great care.

We have already stated that Mr. Turner's religious opinions in the early part of his life soon deviated considerably from those in which he had doubtless been initiated by domestic example and authority. At Dr. Latham's he seems to have imbibed the Arian sentiments prevalent among the English presbyterians of that day, which he retained up to the period of his settling at Wakefield, and for some years afterwards, as appears from his manuscripts of

that date still in the hands of his descendants. The same doctrine is also maintained at considerable length in some letters written about this time to his relative, the Rev. T. Astley, then of Preston, afterwards of Chesterfield, with a sight of which the writer of this memoir has been favoured by his friend, Mr. Astley, of Shrewsbury. In one of these he criticizes with great acuteness the exposition of the introduction to St. John's Gospel, given by Dr. B. Dawson, in his sermons at Lady Moyer's Lecture, in which that ingenious and learned writer seems to have been more successful in objecting to the explanations of others, than in suggesting a preferable hypothesis of his own. Lardner's celebrated Letter on the Logos, he does not appear at this time to have seen. When he read it not long afterwards, it made nearly the same impression upon him that it did much about the same time on his friend, Dr. Priestley, who speaks of it as the instrument of his own conversion to what is called, though erroneously, the *Socinian* hypothesis. His final view of the atonement or reconciliation, probably did not differ materially from that maintained by Dr. Priestley in the Theological Repository, under the signature of Clemens; but it was long before he entirely gave up a certain not very distinct or definite notion of the necessity of the death or sacrifice of Christ to reconcile the justice with the mercy of God, in the pardon and acceptance of sinners on repentance. He was accustomed to a late period occasionally to adopt the strong figurative language of the apostle Paul, in a manner which, to a casual

or unreflecting hearer, might perhaps seem to imply an approach to certain prevalent opinions, which, if he ever embraced them, he had long ago abandoned. We are far from wishing it to be supposed that there was ever in him a disposition to hold back what he believed to be the truth; still less that he was influenced by the unworthy desire to court popularity or maintain influence by appearing to recommend views of Christian doctrine which he secretly disapproved; but merely that, after having satisfied his own mind as to the just interpretation of certain scriptural modes of expression, he did not think it necessary (as some have done) to avoid the use of them because they are often employed in an erroneous sense. To his stated, at least to his attentive hearers, his practice in this respect could occasion no misconception; because he frequently introduced in his public discourses (though without the *parade* of learning) critical explanations of obscure or dubious passages. "But these were only occasional displays of his literary powers. In the general turn of his popular discourses, he was plain, practical, and affecting. It was the prime object of his labours 'to come home to the business and bosoms' of his hearers, and to promote the practice of Christian virtues by a serious and interesting application of Christian motives. He addressed in their turn the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the easy and the distressed; and administered to all, the advice or admonition, the consolation or encouragement, which their respective cases required. And to every different case he adapted

his instructions with the cautious prudence of a deep insight into the workings of the human heart, with the pleasing simplicity of unaffected goodness, and with the winning earnestness of a lively interest in the everlasting happiness of mankind.”*

In 1767, Dr. Priestley, after having spent six years with the highest reputation as a tutor in the Warrington Academy, came to settle as minister of Mill-hill Chapel, at Leeds. Here he renewed his early acquaintance with Mr. Turner, which was quickly matured into a close and intimate friendship. An uninterrupted literary intercourse was kept up between them, during the whole of Dr. Priestley's residence at Leeds. We may presume that Mr. Turner's advice and assistance was of considerable service to this distinguished person; as he appears scarcely ever to have undertaken any thing of consequence at this period of his life without a previous visit to Wakefield. In 1769, the two friends paid a visit to the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne, at Richmond,† where they were introduced to Mr. Lindsey, with whom Mr. Turner from that time forward maintained an intimate and confidential correspondence. Mr. Lindsey confided to him his difficulties with respect to his station in the church, and through the whole of the trying period previous to his resignation and immediately consequent upon

* Wood's Funeral Sermon, p. 19.

† “The company of such worthies as Mr. Turner and Dr. Priestley,” says the Archdeacon, speaking of this interview, “is one of my luxuries; and the last small taste I had of it will make me long till another opportunity affords me a second course.”

it, derived from his letters the most valuable support and encouragement. At his house the pilgrims made their first halt, when they set forward with Providence their guide, but not knowing whither they went, or what was in store for them. When, shortly afterwards, an illiberal and uncandid attack was made on Mr. Lindsey in the newspapers, Mr. Turner came forward, in conjunction with other friends, to refute the calumny and expose the slanderer.*

It was the accidental production of Mr. Turner's *Adversaria Sacra*, in one of his free familiar conversations with Dr. Priestley on subjects of theology, that gave occasion to the establishment of the Theological Repository. The variety of curious remarks which it appeared to contain, was justly thought by Dr. Priestley too valuable to be lost; and it occurred to him that a periodical publication for the express purpose of providing a receptacle for such detached remarks as at present lie scattered among the papers of ingenious men, and for new observations relating to theology, from whatever quarter, would probably be useful and acceptable to the public. Mr. Turner was prevailed on to promise his assistance; and, the scheme having previously received the approbation and concurrence of many learned men, the first number was published in November, 1768. The work continued till the end of the year 1771, when it was suspended for want of encouragement, after three volumes

* See a minute and amusing account of this newspaper controversy in Mrs. Cappe's very interesting memoir of her excellent husband, the Rev. Newcome Cappe, of York.

had been completed. Another series was commenced in 1782, which extended to three volumes more, but Mr. Turner had no further concern in it. The whole collection will retain its value in the estimation of inquisitive liberal-minded theologians as a standard work, from the great number and variety of ingenious speculations and original remarks with which it abounds; and it certainly places the theological talent and learning of the liberal dissenters of that age in a very favourable point of view. That it did not succeed as a *periodical*, is however a subject more of regret than of surprise. The enquiries to which it was chiefly devoted, however interesting and valuable in themselves, were not such as mostly draw the attention of the general reader; and its character, or at least its reputation as a *sectarian* work, of course confined it to a small portion even of the theological public. Hence its circulation was of necessity very limited, and insufficient to defray the expense of publication.

Mr. Turner's contributions to the first series of the Repository bear the signatures of Vigilus and Eusebius, and are numerous and valuable. The first of these contains a series of conjectural emendations of several passages of Scripture, in which there is reason to think that clauses or sentences have been transposed through the carelessness of transcribers. It is easy to see how this might happen, when the writer's eye is fixed on a wrong place in the copy; and afterwards on discovering his mistake, instead of correcting it, which would deface the manuscript, he is apt to content himself

with inserting what had been omitted elsewhere in the best manner he is able. When all books were prepared by manual transcription, and, for the most part, by persons who earned their living by the business, the temptation to conceal such errors would be increased by an unwillingness to render their books less saleable by erasures and blots. Such uncorrected manuscripts accordingly going forth into the world, might be afterwards taken as copies by subsequent transcribers, and thus the error would be perpetuated. And it is conceivable, that an error of this kind might arise at an early period, when the number of copies was but small, or even in the original itself, which would then be handed down to all succeeding copies, and thus be beyond the reach of the ordinary resources of criticism. Several remarkable, and some very plausible examples are then specified, of the probable operation of this source of inaccuracy, some of which had not before been noticed.—The next paper is an attempt to harmonize the narratives of Matthew and Luke respecting the fate of Judas. On this subject however it must be observed, that the principal difficulty is not to combine into one continued narrative the various particulars included in these two very different accounts, but to explain how it has happened that each historian seems to have studiously overlooked all, or nearly all, the circumstances recorded by the other. The statement given in this paper lessens the difficulties which on any supposition must be allowed to be considerable, but can hardly be said to remove them.

3. *Observations on the sun standing still* (Josh. x. 12—14.) In this ingenious and elaborate paper, it is the author's object to shew that the supposed historical narrative of the sun's standing still at the command of Joshua, was merely a fine poetical figure, representing the sun and moon silent with astonishment; a supposition which is the more probable, as the whole is quoted from the book of Jasher, which is believed to have been a collection of historical poems or ballads. He examines minutely the account given of the events, and makes it out that the battle, after which the command of Joshua is supposed to have been uttered, was fought early in the morning, at or near the summer solstice, when there was no pretence for so extravagant a wish as that the day should be supernaturally lengthened in order to enable him more effectually to complete the destruction of his enemies. He shews from the geographical position of the places, that in pressing forward in pursuit of the defeated army, Joshua would pass Gibeon and leave it to the east, so that turning round he might see the morning sun standing as it were over the city, and, excited by the exultation of victory, might exclaim, "Sun, be still over Gibeon," which the people hearing, might understand him as desiring that the course of the sun should be stopped. Perhaps we should hardly think it necessary to take so much trouble in disposing of a difficulty of this sort, but the discussion is ably conducted and the result probably satisfactory.

The most valuable paper in the first volume

is a vindication of the conduct of the apostles, in reply to some objections of a writer who signs himself Pyrrho; who had found fault with their mode of exercising their miraculous powers, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the temporary blindness inflicted on Elymas, and several other instances, which he conceives to evince a spirit too nearly resembling, and but too well fitted to encourage, the ecclesiastical domination of later times. Mr. T. shews in the first place, that there is no ground for the supposition on which this writer's argument proceeds,—that the miraculous gifts were left to be exercised at the discretion of the apostles, so as to render them responsible for the results which ensued,—and that in the particular instances objected to, this was evidently not the case. “The miracles recorded in the New Testament were extraordinary effects, produced by the operation of the power of God, so connected with, and consequent upon, the words or actions of those who were employed in producing them, as was sufficient to testify to others that God was with those persons, and that they really spake and acted by divine direction and authority, in those instances wherein they professed to do so.” If the promise to the apostles, that they should be endued with power from on high, be supposed to amount to more than this, it seems unreasonable to conceive of it as extending beyond the range which is distinctly specified in the grant; now this is confined to such as are of a merciful, gracious, beneficent character, and does not include the infliction of any temporal punishment or other

evil, either on unbelievers or professed Christians. Whenever this was done, we have reason to think that it was by the immediate exercise of divine power, of which the apostles were merely enabled to give the signal or notification to the bystanders.

In an excellent paper on the perpetuity of the Lord's Supper, we have an answer, as able and satisfactory as is any where to be met with, to the objections which some have urged against this commemorative rite. He lays down this principle; that, as our Lord sustained a *public* character and office,—his mission being intended for the benefit of all mankind, to all of whom, therefore, in every distant nation and age, he stood in an equal relation,—we are entitled to infer that every precept of his, every thing which he prescribes to be observed by his disciples, is of universal obligation, unless there is either an express limitation, or something in the nature and object of the institution itself to confine its application. He then shews that the reason given for this ordinance by our Lord himself—"do this in remembrance of me," has not only no exclusive reference to his immediate disciples, but (if there be a difference) must apply more forcibly to those who had not enjoyed the privilege of personal intercourse with Jesus, and in whom the lively recollection of his actions and discourses was not, as in them, maintained by the constant and daily occupation of their lives. As far, therefore, as we can draw any inference from the obvious use and tendency of an institution, we must conclude that it was designed for universal and permanent observ-

ance. Nor is there any thing in the terms used, as reported either by the evangelists or by St. Paul, which limits the practice to any short or definite period; and though it must be admitted that it is not expressly said, 'this rite I mean to be observed in all ages, wherever and whenever my gospel may be preached,'—yet, when we consider the general and equal relation sustained by our Lord to all those who had received the word of his salvation, and more particularly the direct allusion to this relation which almost immediately follows, in his prayer, not for his immediate disciples alone, but for all those who should believe on him through their word, it seems as if no further doubt could remain upon the subject. We have given merely an outline of the argument of this interesting paper; but the manner in which the argument is illustrated and applied, furnishes a beautiful specimen of the combination of critical skill and correct reasoning with a practical appeal to the heart and conscience for which the author was particularly remarkable. Indeed, in all these papers, we constantly retain the feeling, that he is not engaged in a mere exercise of literary ingenuity, but that every thing of this kind is habitually regarded as subservient and instrumental to a higher and nobler purpose.

The next paper, "Christianity standing the Test of Ridicule," is an admirable illustration of an important point connected with the historical evidence of our religion. It is suggested by certain well-known remarks on this subject by Lord Shaftsbury; who, after representing

ridicule as a most effectual test of truth in general, endeavours to make it appear that Christianity at its first introduction was not so freely subjected to this formidable ordeal as it might have been ; and seems to intimate that its opponents might in this way have had a fairer chance of success than by the rougher methods which they actually adopted. Mr. T. enumerates several remarkable incidents, first of our Lord's own history, then of the apostles, and afterwards of the primitive church, which shew clearly that the reverse of this was the case. The Jews, says Lord Shaftsbury, were naturally a very cloudy people, and could not endure railing in matters of religion ; their sovereign argument was, "crucify, crucify." But we find on enquiry abundant proof, that however little they could *endure*, they could *use* ridicule against any thing they disliked ; they could make a plentiful use of nick-names, sneers, and the horse-laugh, as they found occasion, to baffle the force of the most rational arguments. Such was the temper in which the Jewish people and their rulers commonly treated Jesus and his apostles ; nor was the reception they met with in other quarters materially different. The wits and buffoons of the refined people of Greece and Rome, were not sparing in their efforts to make the gospel and its preachers the objects of contempt and derision, as well as of hatred ; so that Christianity appears to have actually made its way in the world, not only in spite of the more formidable terrors of persecution, but notwithstanding all the attempts of the scoffer, if

possible, to render it contemptible. But that which they despised and derided as foolishness, proved itself wiser than men, and prevailed alike over the cruel and bloody opposition of princes and rulers, and the "pleasanter methods" of ribaldry and buffoonery. It has been well observed, that instead of receiving ridicule as the test of truth, we ought rather to consider truth as the proper test of ridicule. "Unless," says our author in conclusion, "it be founded in truth, it has no lasting effect, except on the authors, and those who were under like prejudices. The moment it appears false and impertinent, it excites only indignation or disdain. It is not in the power of the most brilliant wit long to preserve misrepresentations, fictions, and absurdities from contempt and oblivion. A time will come, when even the writings of a Voltaire must sink under such a load."*

In the third volume, among other valuable contributions, we find "Observations on Prophetic Names;" or significant names given by the prophets to persons or things, not descriptive of them particularly, but intended as symbols or memorials of other predictions. Such is the name Shear-Jashub, given by the prophet Isaiah to one of his sons (see Isa. vii. 1—10), signifying "a remnant shall return," and intended for the purpose of confirming the promise of the return of part of the captives which we find in the last verse of the preceding

* A remark in which we might almost discern the spirit of prophecy.

chapter, and which event soon took place. Such is also the name Immanuel (God with us), which in the same manner does not imply that the person who received it was himself God dwelling among his people, but only indicating the presence of God with his people, and his power to accomplish assuredly that which he had promised. In the same manner the name "mighty God" (Isa. ix. 6), supposing it to be applied to Christ, does not indicate that he was *the* mighty God,* or possessed of independent divine power, but is not inappropriately given to him in the state of exaltation described, to which he is raised by the Father; for it is added, "the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."—An ingenious criticism on Philippians ii. 5—11, places the passage in a striking and beautiful light, by contrasting the conduct of the second with that of the first Adam, who, created in the form or image of God, had thought it a prize to be like God, and was therefore degraded.

In an elaborate paper on the meaning of the word atonement, the author examines all the cases in which it is applied to expiatory sacrifices or sin-offerings in the Old Testament; and shews that it refers to offences not against the moral, but against the ceremonial law of Moses in almost every instance. Two apparent exceptions of inferior moment occur; but even with respect to these, it has since been made to appear that the atonement relates, not to the

* It is not unworthy of note, that the definite article here used, is supplied by our translators.

moral offence, but to a ceremonial uncleanness which accompanied it.* He infers that the atonements appointed by the law of Moses did effectually answer the purpose of their institution, which was "to maintain a regular and becoming intercourse between God and his people, in the ordinances of public religious worship; but were of no avail by themselves to take away the guilt of sin, and secure the favour of God to sinners; for *this* they were not appointed; but it must be obtained only by the repentance and amendment of the sinner, who believed in the placability and mercy of God." The word atonement, as is well known, occurs only once in the public version of the New Testament, as the translation of a quite different word from that which it represents in the Old; and is equivalent to *reconciliation*, which was in fact the original meaning of the word in our language. It appears to refer to a state into which, through the gospel of grace made known by the preaching, and ratified by the death and resurrection of Christ, we are already introduced; while a full salvation, in the largest sense of the word, is an effect yet to be completed, and depends on the right use made by each individual of the privileges and means to which he is thus admitted. The death of Christ is frequently represented as the *means* by which this reconciliation is effected, and the forgiveness of sins *already* conferred on be-

* See a valuable essay by the Rev. E. Higginson, entitled "The Sacrifice of Christ scripturally and rationally interpreted."

lievers, in order to their improvement in holiness, but nowhere as the *cause, reason, or motive* why God hath conferred these blessings on men.

The ability and learning discovered in these papers excited a curiosity among the lovers of sacred criticism, to see the notes on the gospels which Mr. Turner had in some measure engaged to furnish for Dr. Priestley's "Harmony of the Evangelists." It is to be lamented, that the reluctance to obtrude himself on the public which he had always discovered, and which now began to grow upon him with the increasing infirmities of age, prevented him from fulfilling this engagement to the extent he once intended. What he did may be seen with the signature T. interspersed among the notes to that excellent work.

In Dr. Priestley's "Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion" (pt. iii. chap. 3, sec. 4) is an excellent criticism by Mr. Turner on Phil. i. 21—25, in which he gives what appears to be the just interpretation of that passage, as offering no encouragement to the notion of a state of intermediate consciousness between death and the resurrection. By being "with Christ," the apostle seems to mean being in a state of security with him, under the protection of Divine power and the sanction of his faithful promise, reserved as a trust or deposit committed to him both by God and ourselves, in order to be restored to life, and made completely happy with him at the resurrection of the just.

In 1769, Mr. T. published, at the request of

the trustees of the Leeds Infirmary, a sermon he had preached at Leeds for the benefit of that excellent charity. About the same time, he gave the world a specimen of his devotional compositions, in Dr. Priestley's "Serious Address to Masters of Families, with Forms of Family Prayer." The third of these is by Mr. Turner, and is justly characterized by the editor as "excellent for a rich variety of sentiment, and for propriety and force of expression."

In 1776 he published, at the request of his congregation, the *Whole Service*, as performed on the 13th of December in that year, the first fast-day observed during the American war. The devotional part in particular of this service, has been very generally and deservedly admired. The sermon preached on this occasion, from Isaiah lviii. 6, 7, is devoted to an examination of the proper mode of solemnizing a religious fast appointed by public authority, in order to make it conducive of its professed object, as an expression of humiliation for national sins, imploring forgiveness and mercy, and supplicating a removal of the calamities with which God in his righteous providence had already visited the people. It is obvious, in the first place, that no merely external observance can be of any avail, if no pains are taken to make the heart right with God; the outward show adopted by too many, in order that they may appear unto men to fast, should be rather avoided, in conformity with our Saviour's injunction, Matt. vi. 18. The proper mode of solemnizing a day of fasting and humiliation, as indicated by the text, consists in correcting, remedying, and re-

forming all evil deeds, particularly all unrighteousness, oppression, and cruelty; and in performing acts of kindness and liberality to the poor and distressed.

But such fasting as this has little reference to the evident, and, we may often say, almost the avowed purpose of such seasons, when appointed by public authority, especially in times of war. When they are occasioned by circumstances arising out of the determinate counsel of the very parties who prescribe them, and are to all appearance dictated by a wish to engage Divine Providence in favour of the warlike policy of the nation and its rulers, and to enlist the religious feelings and impressions of the great mass of the community in support of a particular system of measures,—when the most prominent sins of the nation are the sins of the government, in which all its acts and proceedings shew that it is determined to persevere, an outward solemnity of this kind appears more honoured in the breach than the observance. Some bolder spirits, it is true, have not been slow to take advantage of such occasions to “lift on high the warning voice,” and to impress the important reflection that the prevailing public ills are indeed sins of the nation, for which every individual belonging to it is responsible, to the extent of his opportunities of exercising direct or indirect influence on general opinion, or on the conduct of public affairs; and this accordingly is a purpose to which national fasts have sometimes been applied with no small spirit and effect. But, in general, it may perhaps be

doubted whether this is not travelling beyond the proper province of a servant of him whose kingdom is not of this world, especially in periods of more than ordinary political or party excitement; and there seems accordingly to be a prevailing disposition among the present race of dissenters—at least among those who take the highest ground in rejecting all temporal interference in religious concerns—to pay no regard to public appointments of this sort. May it be long before another season arrives when the solemn hypocrisy shall be again renewed of ordaining *annual* fasts,—that the nation, identified with the government, may “confess the right and still the wrong pursue.”

The views which Mr. Turner had formed of the justice or policy of the war which occasioned this solemnity, are not obscurely intimated in various parts of the service; in which he prays, not, as many doubtless did on the same occasion, that victory might attend our arms by sea and land, and that the audacious rebels who had defied the supremacy of the British crown, might speedily be brought to shame and condign punishment,—but, that enslaved nations might be delivered from tyrannical oppression and lawless rule, and that every design and attempt of wicked men against the just rights of mankind might be defeated. In his private correspondence at this period, he takes, as might be expected, a much more decided tone; reprobating the proceedings of the government, and the feelings which at that early period of the war there is too much reason to think pervaded the bulk of the people. He was on all occa-

sions a steady friend to the interests of civil and religious liberty, and was not backward, when a proper opportunity offered, to employ his pen in their defence.

In September, 1777, his eldest son entered the academy at Warrington, to pursue his studies for the Christian ministry. It will readily be supposed that Mr. Turner's high estimate of the importance of the ministerial office, joined to his paternal regard and affection, gave a peculiar warmth to the lively interest which he took in the progress of one so dear to him, and led him to endeavour as much as possible to promote it, by the judicious advice which his enlightened mind and long experience so well fitted him to suggest. His letters to his son, during the course of his academical studies, contain the materials of an admirable manual for a young man about to devote himself to these sacred duties;—not reduced into any formal systematic shape, but arising naturally from time to time out of the circumstances which suggested them, and enlivened in no ordinary degree by the graces of that attractive form of composition, in which he knew well how to pass “from grave to gay, from lively to severe.” It would be impossible to make as copious a selection from this correspondence as we could wish, without too far transgressing the proper limits of this memoir; but it is hoped that a few specimens will not be unacceptable, both on account of their intrinsic value, and as illustrating the opinions, character and dispositions of the writer.

* * * * *

“Oct. 18, 1777.

“Why do you say ‘we have nothing here worth telling you,’ when you have such ample sources of information that would be very acceptable to me? particularly the order and hours of the lectures you attend; the manner in which Dr. Aikin conducts his classical lectures, &c. I have no doubt of his observations being very instructive and pleasing, and hope you take down in short-hand the most important, and afterwards revise your author, and what the Dr. has remarked upon him. How do you like your authors? Herodian I never read; but he is accounted a polite and elegant historian; I fancy you find Seneca’s style too quaint and flowery. He is perpetually hunting after pretty and surprising turns, and though he gives you the same thought in half a dozen forms, they are all so loaded with ornament that it is difficult to discern his precise meaning. How different is the pen of Cicero, which pours forth a full, clear, and strong stream of sentiment,—fitted at once to instruct, delight, and impress. But Cicero’s pen was formed under the commonwealth, and in an age of bold and manly exertions; Seneca’s was cut to the temper of despotism, and in an age of fear and servility.

“I recommend it to you to endeavour to establish a sort of classical club, or society of a few of the most intelligent and ingenious among your fellow-students, who have a taste for such studies, in order to read together some of the most polite and approved classic writers, and also to converse on literary subjects, parti-

cularly on those relating to the studies in which you are engaged. Have you any thing of this sort already on foot? I am the more solicitous for you to get some such improving mode of spending your evenings, particularly in the winter, partly that you may avoid all temptations to spend them in idle frolic, and partly because I would not have you get a habit of late evening studies. Rise early in the morning and improve it well. When your stomach is empty, and nature refreshed with seasonable sleep, you will find your apprehension quick, your head clear, your imagination lively, and memory more retentive; consequently your progress more easy, speedy, and effectual. But go to bed at a good hour. I would wish you to read hardly any thing after supper, except classics, and that in company, and mingled with cheerful, lively, and improving conversation. You will then lie down with your head unincumbered with working thoughts; you will sleep sound, and rise sprightly, well prepared for the business of the day; whereas night studies hurt the eyes, exhaust the spirits, weary and relax the mental faculties, and lay the foundation of many miserable disorders; after them, sleep is broken and unrefreshing through the ferment of disjointed thoughts.

“It has been said by way of praise of many plodding midnight and still later students, that their works *smelt of the lamp*; perhaps so; but I doubt 'twas only of the dusky smoke and foetid fumes of the lamp, whereas probably they would have been much more instructive, cor-

rect, and pleasing, had the authors and their compositions been illuminated by the rays of the *rising* sun."

* * * * *

"Nov. 1777.

"I think the young gentlemen you mention do me much honour in so readily adopting my idea of a classical club. Your object in the prosecution of it will not be merely to understand the meaning of words and phrases; you all, I hope, are tolerable philologists and grammarians already; but you will read as antiquarians,—to make yourselves masters of ancient customs and manners, the state of knowledge and literature, the arts and politics, the military and peace establishments, and the effects of all these things on the happiness or misery, the prosperity or decline of the several nations,—in short, to make yourselves as it were of the age and country of your author, and then you will read him with the same ideas with which he wrote. You will be almost spectators of the things he describes, and judges of his descriptions. You will observe how fine writers vary and mix their modes of expression, to keep the minds of their readers in constant exercise, yet continually pleased with change and novelty, like a broken and diversified landscape. But why should I drop these hints to young and generous spirits, the wings of whose imaginations have already been plumed, and all the delicate sensibilities of taste awakened, by the writings of Homer and Sophocles, Horace and Virgil?"

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“Dec. 1777.

. “I had a letter from Mr. Lindsey last Sunday, a part of which relates to you, and therefore I shall transcribe it. ‘I rejoice to hear your son is so well placed to your liking, and does so well. I indeed expect no common things from him, no ordinary usefulness in this great system, if he perseveres in his virtuous and most industrious course and pursuit after wisdom, of which I can have no doubt. I shall hope hereafter to be better acquainted with him (if I live), and pray tell him so when you write next, with mine and my wife’s kind remembrances.’ You see, my dear, what kind and honourable expectations and hopes this very excellent and justly celebrated person forms of you. The slight interview you had with him here, I am sure made such an impression on your heart, that you will ever make his esteem the object of your most ardent wish, and account it a most real honour. The friendly notice of such a man may hereafter be a real advantage, and at present, too, as a spur to excite your utmost industry to fulfil, or even exceed his kind expectations. You are sensible that your residence at Warrington is and will be a heavy expense to me. I hope and expect that you will avoid enhancing that expense unnecessarily and unprofitably; but the design of it is to procure you every mental and moral improvement you can get there. All I desire is, that you will make yourself the best bargain you can. I have no doubt that you will endeavour to gather up every thing you can from your masters, and

approve and applaud the methods you take to do so ; but remark also the tempers and turn of mind of your fellow-students with whom you associate ; whose conversation is most instructive and useful, and turns least on trifling impertinences, and cultivate them most. This year you must be content to be a humble imitator of the best models ; hereafter I hope you will have the honour to be recommended by your tutors as a pattern for your juniors to form themselves upon."

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" March, 1780.

" The design of prayer is not to inform or remind unerring wisdom of our cases, wants or desires ; nor is it to direct or change the measures of the divine administration. The efficacy of prayer is on ourselves, by impressing the sentiments of piety deep into our minds, and thereby preparing us for a more regular and persevering obedience to the laws of God. This is done in a very powerful manner by recognizing with seriousness and solemnity, in a direct address to God himself, his perfect nature and character, his supreme dominion, the rectitude of his government,—by acknowledging the equity and goodness of his laws, by confessing our error and folly in transgressing them, and supplicating pardon of our sins and deliverance from their power, by thankfully reviewing his numberless mercies, and begging the continuance of his protection, conduct, and blessing. In short, prayer is not an ultimate, but an instrumental duty, and, like all other divine instruments, is happily adapted to accomplish

its purpose. But let me add, that our *Christian* prayers, that is, as disciples of Christ and in his name, should not fail to interweave, or rather be grounded on, the peculiar discoveries, obligations, and hopes of the gospel. Our Lord represents his doctrine as *food* of the soul; serious meditation and prayer upon it is like the digestive power, that assimilates and unites it to the very substance and habit of the mind, and thereby infuses into it the very principle of life eternal.

“O, my son, with what pleasure do I write in answer to your enquiries on such a subject as this. 'Tis like asking the way to Zion with one's face already set thitherward. How suitable are such inquiries for a candidate for the gospel ministry! I trust that you will not only inquire into the nature and design and topics of prayer, but be also much in the practice of it in private, especially whenever you feel your heart enlivened with the study and contemplation of religious subjects; both to nourish your own soul in sacred wisdom and goodness, and to acquire a copious fund and facility and propriety of expression, when, in due time, you are to lead the devotions of your fellow-Christians and fellow-worshippers.

“I rejoice much that you have undertaken to harmonize the gospels after the manner of Dr. Jebb. I have heard Dr. Priestley say, that if he had the direction of students in divinity, he would put them all upon drawing up harmonies, according to their own ideas and judgment, both to improve their acquaintance with the doctrines of the gospel, and to exer-

cise their critical attention and acumen. Go on, my dear son, with these and similar pursuits; you will thus continually enrich your private stores, and become a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and able, like a prudent and plentiful householder, to bring out of your treasures things new and old.

“In a former letter, after mentioning the popular orator at Liverpool, you expressed a wish that rational preachers would condescend to accommodate themselves more to the capacities and taste of the common people. I agree with you so far as to style and manner, provided vulgarisms and degrading familiarities be guarded against, which must be affectation and even hypocrisy in a man of real sense, and forfeit him the character of rational, with the rational. Why should cultivated minds be disgusted and hurt with what produces no real instruction or improvement to the uncultivated, but only excites a foolish gaze, and as foolish applause? * But then, as to the *substance* of truth, and especially of gospel truth, it is of too serious a nature and solemn importance to

* It would be an error to surmise from these remarks, that the writer was biassed by a disposition to adapt his discourses chiefly to the taste and wants of his more educated hearers; though it is probable that Mr. Turner had much more than the usual proportion of such hearers. But his discourses sufficiently shew that he endeavoured, and not without success, to accommodate himself to *all* classes of his congregation. One not injudicious rule he was accustomed with this view to recommend to young preachers, —considering that the basis of our language is the Anglo-Saxon, to give the preference, as far as may be, to words derived from this source, over such as have been imported from the Latin.

be tampered with by way of accommodation. Shame on all popularity obtained by such arts ! Do you, my dear son, ever remember and reverence that principle of St. Paul (2 Cor. ii. 17), 'For we are not as many, who corrupt (or huckster) the word of God ; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.' This principle cuts up all artificial *uniting schemes* by the roots."

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Mr. Turner's younger son was brought up to business, and engaged in the cotton manufacture at Bolton, in Lancashire. Many of his letters to Mr. John Turner, which are preserved, sufficiently shew him to have been not less competent to give wise and judicious advice to a young man about to engage in the concerns of active life, than to one preparing himself for the ministry of the word. We are obliged at present to content ourselves with inserting one of these, addressed to the *speculative* propensity, unhappily at least as prevalent in these days as it could have been at the time when he gave his son this affectionate and earnest warning against it.

" Dec. 1784.

"I am sorry for the account you give us of the failure of the G——s, through an unfortunate connexion and launching so deep in the American trade ; an infatuation that has spread so widely, and done so much mischief. I doubt not, you justly impute the imprudence of these unfortunate young men to a spirit of ambition that made them in haste to be rich. Such, says the apostle, fall into temptation and a

snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, that drown men in destruction and perdition. Such, says the wise man, shall not be innocent. Let these events be warnings to you, my son. If it shall please Providence to introduce you into a regular and moderately gainful business, stick to it, pursue it steadily and closely, and thank God for it. You will hereby spend your days with a more quiet conscience, a more established reputation, and in the end, perhaps, with better success than most of your enterprising speculating neighbours. Let not the phantoms of ambition or the dreams of projectors draw you out of your proper line; nor suffer yourself to be connected with men of such a spirit, lest you suffer with them in their fall. You say they sent twenty times the value in goods of what they were ever worth. How great and wide-spread calamity have they brought on industrious families! What an instance this of the total want of moral principle and sensibility of right and wrong! O, my son, whatever befalls you, maintain a conscience void of offence both towards God and men. Hold fast your integrity, and let it not go; neither let your heart reproach you so long as you live. Perhaps some will say that it is impossible to observe such rigid maxims with any prospect of success in the course of business and trade. I am sure they are mistaken; the present example and many other such shew they are. What might the G——s have been in a few years, had they adhered to these maxims? What are they now by neglecting them? A hundred sufferers will not spare to tell.

“ I hope, my dear son, this Sunday evening lecture will not be thrown away upon you. It comes from your best friend, who cannot hope to live long to see you what he most wishes you ; but who pleases himself with the expectation that surviving friends will see you,—that noblest work of God,—*an honest man.*”

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In 1779, Mr. Turner was engaged, with several other ministers, in the ordination of the Rev. Joseph Bowden, at Call-lane, Leeds. His part in the service, the whole of which was published, was the address previous to the questions, in which he took occasion to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of Mr. Whitaker, the venerable pastor of that society for more than half a century. In this address, he takes an opportunity of disclaiming for himself and his brethren, all pretension to the power of communicating in the service, still (perhaps injudiciously) called *ordination*, any peculiar authority which he would not have equally possessed without their intervention. “ You expect not from us, nor do we pretend, to confer upon you any indelible character or office, any authority or privileges, or any new powers or abilities ; both you and we, I trust, look much higher. All your powers and abilities are from God ; both those he hath already bestowed on you, and such as he may further impart ; and they entirely depend on him for support and effect. Your authority and privileges, as a minister of the gospel, you derive from him who commanded his apostles to go and disciple all nations ; and your particular

relation to this church is consequent on their choice of you, and your consent to be their minister. I trust we all have learnt, that we have one Father who is in heaven—one Master, Christ Jesus—and that we all are brethren, who wish always to love and live as such. All we profess to do in this service is, (and I persuade myself you will account it no mean benefit,) to manifest in this public manner our affectionate esteem and brotherly regards for you, founded on a competent knowledge of your dispositions, conduct, and ministerial abilities, and, at the same time, fervently recommend you, by our united prayers, to divine direction and assistance to enable you to fulfil your ministry faithfully, and to a divine blessing to crown your labours with abundant success.”

We have already stated that Mr. Turner's station and acknowledged character and talents, gave him no small personal weight and influence among his neighbouring brethren; though no man was further from seeking for such influence, or claiming it as his due, by any acts of assumption on his own part. Hence he was frequently called on to take a leading part in such services as the preceding, and also to address the annual friendly meetings of ministers with whom he was associated. On one of these occasions, at Halifax, in 1781, he delivered a discourse on St. Paul's sense of soundness in religion, from Titus ii. 1. At this period, when there was not so impassable a gulf fixed as at present between the different denominations of dissenters, a considerable range of theological sentiment was occasionally repre-

sented at these meetings. In a letter to a friend, Mr. T. speaks of the apprehension he had felt lest his sermon should give offence to some of his hearers. "I expected no compliments," he adds, "when behold, I was overwhelmed with abundance. Some were for having it printed immediately; and in reply to my objections, they urged that it was so well suited to the spirit of the times, and the state of religion in the country, that it could not fail to do much good." After some hesitation, it was accordingly sent to the press. The preacher enters into a careful examination of all the passages in which the terms *sound doctrine*, *soundness in the faith*, &c., occur, and concludes from the whole that "by *sound* doctrine the apostle means not soundness in any speculative opinions, still less a strict adherence to any human formulary of faith, but the preaching of the practical duties of Christianity; that he is 'sound in the faith' (or in *fidelity*), who, animated by a stedfast hope of eternal life, earnestly endeavours to deny all ungodliness, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world; but that he is *unsound* in the faith, whatever he may pretend to believe, or whatever noise he may make about believing, who lives in the habitual commission of any sin or neglect of any duty."

Towards the latter end of the summer of 1782, an invitation having been received by his eldest son from a very respectable society at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the ministers of the West Riding agreed, in imitation of one of the first examples of ordination we read of (Acts

xiii. 3), to improve the occasion of their stated annual meeting, by recommending their young friend to the favour of Divine Providence, and dismissing him with some good advice to his distant settlement. On this occasion, the admonitory part of the service naturally devolved on Mr. Turner. On no occasion, perhaps, did he ever appear to such advantage, and yet so exactly in his proper character. The excellent instructions which he proposed on every branch of the ministerial office, were animated throughout with such a truly devotional spirit, and such an earnestness of affectionate solicitude for his son, and the preacher discovered in the delivery of them a heart so filled with the tenderest emotions, under the controul of so well regulated a self-command, as greatly to affect the whole audience. After an impressive and affectionate exordium, he founds his exhortation on that suitable and appropriate passage (Matt. v. 13—16), “Ye are the salt of the earth, &c.,” and proceeds to derive from these just and striking similitudes a view of the nature and purposes of the ministerial office, of the situation in which the Christian minister is placed, and in which he ought to consider himself as standing with relation to his fellow-Christians, the duties which are thus imposed upon him, and his proper object and aim in the discharge of these duties. In one place he forcibly illustrates the peculiar moral danger to which the minister of religion is exposed, who suffers himself to regard his ministrations as a matter of *professional* duty, as a labour not of the heart but of the understanding merely. He

concludes with the following affecting peroration : “ It is an obvious remark which Solomon makes,—but a remark that may be improved to very important purposes by a reflecting mind,—‘ One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh.’ You, my son, are in the third generation of ministers of the gospel successively in your family.* May you, through the blessing of God, far excel your ancestors—in all ministerial gifts and graces—in fidelity—and in abundant success ! May you gain many more seals to your ministry, that shall be your joy and crown of rejoicing, on the great day of the Lord Jesus ! And when he, the chief Shepherd, shall appear, may you receive from him a crown of glory that fadeth not away ! This is the fervent wish and prayer of an affectionate father and most faithful friend : may the God of all grace confirm it ! Amen.”

This was a species of service for which Mr. Turner was peculiarly fitted, by the authority which he derived from his age, from his reputation for that learning which peculiarly befits the Christian minister, from the apostolic simplicity of his character, from the affectionate earnestness of his manner, and from the gravity mixed with easy cheerfulness and politeness, which distinguished his whole deportment. The

*Two generations more may now be added, to whom this remark, and the impressive admonition grounded upon it, may be applied. May those who now either bear this honoured name, or rejoice to trace their descent from the same stem, ever regard this “fervent wish and prayer” as though it had been addressed to themselves, and offered up on their behalf to the throne of grace !

word of exhortation and admonition from his lips, was received by his young friends with all the deference they might have paid to a dignitary clothed with the imposing honours of episcopal station. Yet his *authority*, for we will give it that name, was purely personal, and in no degree resulting from any ecclesiastical constitution.

In 1785, he preached a New Year's Day Sermon, entitled "A Caution against Sinful Compliances," addressed to the younger part of his audience, for whose use it was printed, at their own request and expense.

In 1790, the increasing infirmities of age rendering an assistant necessary, he was rendered happy by the choice which was made of the Rev. T. Johnstone; to whom, in July, 1792, he entirely resigned the pastoral charge. On this occasion, he was requested by his congregation to publish, as a monument of their long connexion, a volume or two of his sermons. Accordingly, one volume was immediately prepared for the press. From the circumstances attending the request, it was plain that they would be considered and perused as the last farewell advices of an aged pastor to his flock; and it was thought most suitable to this idea, that they should consist for the most part of plain and affectionate practical addresses to them on their respective duties, according to their respective ages and stations in life. They are, however, on the whole a fair average specimen of the usual style of his pulpit compositions; and well deserve the commendation bestowed on them at the time in the British

Critic ; which represents them as “ a collection of very judicious animated practical discourses, in which the most anxious regard for the welfare, temporal as well as spiritual, of his hearers, particularly of the younger sort, appears to have warmed the heart and prompted the tongue of the venerable preacher.”

Three additional sermons were printed in 1803, in conformity with the dying request of Mr. Joseph Holdsworth, who had been a constant hearer and very intimate and justly esteemed friend of the author. They well sustain the character of those contained in this volume, to which they form a suitable appendix. A proposal was intimated of publishing another volume of discourses of a more critical and speculative character. This however was never carried into effect ; but several valuable papers of this description have been inserted from time to time in the Monthly Repository and Christian Reformer, partly with his own name, and partly under the appropriate signature of *Vigilius Posthumus*.*

From this time, Mr. T. began to experience a rapid decline. It afforded his friends, however, a subject of abundant thankfulness, that he experienced so little bodily pain ; and that he never appeared to be distressed or uneasy at the gradual decay of his mental powers, but still retained that calm and placid composure which had distinguished him so much when in

* See Monthly Repository, ii. 317 ; iii. 34 ; vii. 14 ; xiii. 265 ; xiv. 109 ; New Series, i. 88 ; ii. 455 ; Christian Reformer, i. 349 ; iv. 457 ; New Series, viii. 730.

the full possession of his faculties. On the 26th of August, 1794, after passing rather a restless night, he appeared to fall into a comfortable sleep, which continued with little interruption till the morning of the 28th; when, almost without a struggle, he obtained a release from the infirmities of old age, strikingly correspondent with the gentle serenity and peaceableness of his life.

It may be unnecessary to lengthen this memoir by any further reflections on a character, which we trust is not inaccurately portrayed in the preceding narrative. But we cannot refuse ourselves the gratification of adding the following not less just than complimentary lines by Mrs. Barbauld, forming the conclusion of a beautiful didactic poem written on the leaves of an ivory pocket-book, which she presented to his eldest son, then a little boy aged near eight years.

“Yet should kind heaven thy opening mind adorn,
And bless thy noon of knowledge as thy morn;
Yet were thy mind with every science blest,
And every virtue glowing in thy breast;
With learning meekness, and with candour zeal,
Clear to discern, and generous to feel;
Yet, should the graces o’er thy breast diffuse,
The softer influence of the polished muse;
‘’Tis no original,’ the world will tell,
And all your praise is but—*to copy well.*”

RICHARD PRICE

WAS born February 23, 1723, at Tynton, in Glamorganshire. His father was for many years the minister of a dissenting congregation at Bridgend, in the same county. At eight years of age he was sent to the grammar school at Neath, and was afterwards removed to Pentwyn, in Carmarthenshire, where he was placed under the care of the Rev. Samuel Jones; a gentleman, of whom his pupil was accustomed to speak in terms of high respect and regard, as possessing a truly enlightened, liberal, and candid mind. From him it is probable he imbibed in a great measure a tendency to those more liberal views and opinions which distinguished him through life. For his father appears to have been a man not only of rigid orthodoxy, but of warm temper and strong passions; and manifested great displeasure on observing any disposition in his son to deviate from the standards of the Calvinistic faith in search of other guides; so much so, that having one day surprised him in the act of reading a volume of Clarke's sermons, he snatched the book from him in great wrath, and threw it into the fire. Perhaps it is not necessary to look further than to the impression which such an incident as this, and the character and disposition which led to it, were likely to make on

any ingenuous and inquiring mind, for the strong repugnance which the son conceived for the distinguishing tenets of his father's creed.

From Mr. Jones' he was removed, at the age of fifteen, to the academy of the Rev. Vavasour Griffith, at Talgarth, where he was a student at the time of his father's death, in 1739. This event by no means improved his worldly circumstances or prospects; for Mr. Price's disposition of his property was influenced by the vain ambition of making an eldest son; a practice hardly defensible in any rank of life, and to the last degree absurd in the middle classes of society, where there is no pretence of a necessity for larger means to maintain family interest or high station. With this view, however, he left the bulk of his property, which seems to have been not inconsiderable, to his son by a former marriage, leaving his widow and six other children, of whom Richard was the youngest, very slenderly provided for. In consequence of this he became in a great measure dependent for his support, during the remaining part of his education, on his uncle, the Rev. Samuel Price, of London, at this time co-pastor with Dr. Watts; by whose advice he removed from Talgarth, and was admitted into the academy supported by Mr. Coward's trustees, of which Mr. Eames was at that time the principal tutor. So humble was the condition to which his father's unreasonable family pride had reduced his finances, that he was obliged to trudge, bundle in hand, from his own home to Bristol, from whence he performed the remainder of his journey to London in a broad-

wheeled waggon. These circumstances add to the merit of that disinterested generosity and fraternal affection which he displayed at this period, in dividing the little that his father had bequeathed to him between his two sisters, to whom still less had been left, reserving only a few pounds to convey him to London.

At this institution, with some interruption from ill health, he pursued his studies for four years, much to his own satisfaction and improvement. Mr. Eames had previously filled the post of classical and mathematical tutor, and was a man of considerable scientific eminence and reputation; it is probable, therefore, that he may have been instrumental in leading the attention of his pupil to those pursuits in which he afterwards so greatly distinguished himself. After the completion, however, of his academical course, his modest diffidence prevented him from immediately undertaking the pastoral charge of any congregation, and induced him to accept an offer of residing with Mr. Streatfield, of Stoke Newington, in the capacity of domestic chaplain.

In this retirement, as it may well be called, he continued for thirteen years, during which little is recorded of him; but it cannot be doubted that he duly availed himself of the advantages which a situation of this kind in the neighbourhood of the metropolis afforded him for personal improvement, and for extending his acquaintance, not merely with the studies peculiar to his profession, but with the various branches of mathematical and moral science, in which his valuable performances

afterwards proved him to be no mean proficient. He also preached occasionally for various ministers in London and its vicinity, and for a short time officiated as assistant to Dr. Chandler at the Old Jewry. At length, towards the close of his residence with Mr. Streatfield, he was chosen morning preacher to a small but respectable congregation at Newington Green. His manner as a preacher, at this period of his life, is said to have been deficient in those external requisites which are necessary to popularity with the multitude, and his audiences, though select and intelligent, were far from being numerous. Indeed, at one time he was so much depressed and dispirited by the failure of his attempts to draw to the all-important topics of the Christian preacher the attention which in his estimation they deserved, as to have serious thoughts of abandoning the duties of the pulpit altogether. But it is not a little remarkable, that in more advanced life, and after he had acquired a high reputation as a political writer, and as a man of literature and of science, he was much followed as a preacher; and many of the identical sermons which were originally delivered to almost empty pews, were afterwards addressed to crowded and admiring audiences.

By the death of Mr. Streatfield, and that of his uncle, which happened in the year 1756, Mr. Price's circumstances were considerably improved; the former having left him a legacy in money, the latter a house in Leadenhall Street and some other property. Shortly after this he married Miss Sarah Blundell, a Lei-

cestershire lady, with whom, notwithstanding the solitudes arising from a long continued delicate and precarious state of health, he lived very happily till her decease in 1786. During the first year after his marriage he resided at Hackney, but afterwards removed to Newington, to be nearer to his congregation, and for the sake of greater retirement and quiet in the pursuit of his studies. Previous to his removal, however, he had made his first appearance as an author, by the publication, in 1758, of his "Review of the Principal Questions in Morals." Neither the subject of this work, nor the manner of treating it, was at all likely to procure for it a rapid sale, or for its author a widely extended popularity. Nor can we suppose that he looked forward to any such result; but he obtained his reward in the high and merited reputation which it soon procured for him from those who were best qualified to estimate the learning, ability, and acuteness which it displayed. In fact it speedily acquired, and has ever since maintained, the rank of a standard authority, to which the advocates of the views it espouses of the disputed questions in moral science are accustomed to appeal, as containing the most authentic and accurate statement of their opinions. Still, though by no means calculated to suit the taste of the general reader, and entering into many abstruse and profound metaphysical discussions which are perhaps sometimes scarcely intelligible except to those who have made such matters their particular study, the volume came to a third edition in 1787, and has we believe been since that time again reprinted.

The author sets out with an examination of Mr. Locke's doctrine with regard to the origin of our ideas, which refers them all to sensation and reflection. This doctrine he thinks liable to some degree of modification ; and endeavours to shew that the understanding is to be regarded as a source of new simple ideas, which constitute as it were a part of its nature, and though they may be developed by experience, cannot be traced either to sensation or to reflection as their original source. In this class he ranks our ideas of solidity, space, duration, power, all abstract ideas, proportion, identity, existence, and among the rest the ideas of moral right and wrong. These latter he regards like the rest, as simple ideas, and consequently does not attempt to define them, nor to shew what is the source or foundation of the obligation we feel to adhere to the one and avoid the other. This indeed he considers as an enquiry altogether futile ; and the question, " Why am I obliged to do what is right ? " as identical and absurd. It follows from hence according to him, that morality is, in the language of Cudworth, eternal and immutable ; consisting in abstract fitnesses or relations, like the properties of a circle or a triangle, which depend on no will or power from without, but are what they are through a necessity of nature.

The chief objection which presents itself to a theory of morals founded upon this principle is, that it fails to account for the strong and lively *emotions* with which we regard the actions and dispositions of moral agents. They appear to us not only right or wrong, but good

or evil ; and excite feelings of approbation or abhorrence altogether unlike the bare and cold assent of the understanding when we perceive the truth of a mathematical theorem. Our author gives a very exalted picture of the dignity and beauty of virtue ; but takes no pains to explain in what he conceives that dignity and beauty to consist, and the perception of this dignity he represents as constituting the obligation to practise it. Virtue must be loved, admired, and followed for itself, and for itself alone. It is however so necessarily connected with happiness, and this is a reflection so obviously presenting itself when we are desirous of persuading others to practise it, that even those who disregard this connexion in theory, cannot avoid occasionally adverting to it. The mere perception of certain relations or fitnesses, seems much too recondite, abstract, and metaphysical to give rise to any moral *sentiment*, even in those who can comprehend them ; and to account for this we must at length recur to the conception of good or evil, affecting or likely to affect ourselves or others.

“ I cannot perceive,” says our author, “ an action to be right, without *approving* it, or approve it, without being conscious of some degree of *satisfaction* and complacency. I cannot perceive an action to be wrong, without *disapproving* it, or disapprove it without being *displeased* with it. Right actions then, *as such*, must be *grateful*, and wrong ones *ungrateful* to us.” It cannot be doubted that this is a correct statement of the fact according to our present experience ; and the philosopher, accustomed

to theoretical speculations on the nature and dignity of virtue, will assure you that his feelings of admiration and satisfaction are altogether unconnected with any reflections on the utility or expediency of the character he approves. And he may tell you the truth as far as his present feelings and this particular instance are concerned; but it may not be on that account the less true, that the *origin* of these strong feelings is to be found in those very conceptions of *utility* which he now takes so much pains to disclaim; or else in the prejudices of education, the authority of parents and of teachers, the general sentiments of mankind, and other external influences which he would doubtless disclaim still more loudly and decidedly.

The concluding chapter contains an application of this account of morality, to the explanation and proof of some of the principal doctrines of natural religion, particularly the moral attributes of God, his moral government, and a future state of rewards and punishments. This is perhaps the most able and satisfactory part of the work; and leaves the reader with the impression that much of what may have appeared paradoxical or obscure, is so in a great measure in consequence of the unavoidable imperfection and ambiguity of language when applied to topics so far beyond its ordinary range. No part of the obscurity sometimes complained of in this work is to be laid to the charge of the writer, whose style is uniformly correct and perspicuous. Occasionally the dignity of the subject raises him into a lofty and

imposing strain of eloquence. In speaking of the character of rectitude as a law, which not only directs, but binds all moral agents, he expresses himself as follows :

“That is properly a *law* to us, which we always and unavoidably feel and own ourselves *obliged* to obey ; and which, as we obey or disobey it, is attended with the immediate sanctions of inward triumph and self-applause, or of inward shame and reproach, together with the secret apprehensions of the favour or displeasure of a superior righteous power, and the anticipations of future rewards and punishments. That has proper *authority* over us, to which, if we refuse submission, we transgress our duty, incur guilt, and expose ourselves to just vengeance. All this is certainly true of our moral judgment, and contained in the idea of it.

“Rectitude, then, or virtue, is a LAW. And it is the *first* and *supreme* law ; to which all other laws owe their force, on which they depend, and in virtue of which alone they oblige. It is a *universal* law. The whole creation is ruled by it ; under it men and all rational beings subsist. It is the source and guide of all the actions of the Deity himself, and on it his throne and government are founded. It is an *unalterable* and *indispensable* law. The repeal, suspension, or even relaxation of it, once, for a moment, in any part of the universe, cannot be conceived without a contradiction. Other laws have had a date ; a time when they were enacted, and became of force. They are confined to particular places, rest on precarious

foundations, may lose their vigour, grow obsolete with time, and become useless and neglected. Nothing like this can be true of this law. It has no date. It never was made or enacted. It is prior to all things. It is self-valid and self-originated, and must for ever retain its usefulness and vigour, without the possibility of diminution or abatement. It is cœval with eternity; as unalterable as necessary, everlasting truth; as independent as the existence of God, and as sacred and awful as his nature and perfections. The *authority* it possesses is native and essential to it; underrived and absolute. It is superior to all other authority. It is indeed self-evident, that properly speaking, there *is* no other authority; nothing else that can claim our obedience, or that *ought* to guide and rule heaven and earth. It is, in short, the *one* authority in nature; the same in all times and in all places; or, in one word, the DIVINE authority." p. 177.

In the year 1763, Mr. Price was appointed afternoon preacher to the congregation which at that time assembled in Poor Jewry Street, as successor to Dr. Benson. Here, however, his celebrity not having as yet been materially extended by his publication, notwithstanding the favour with which it had been received by the discerning few, he was not enabled to attract any numerous audience. About the same time he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, to whose transactions he became a frequent and valuable contributor, especially of papers connected with the doctrine of probabilities, in surances on lives, &c.

About this time, in examining the papers of an ingenious friend lately deceased, Mr. Bayes of Tunbridge, Mr. Price's attention was attracted to an imperfect solution of an important problem in the doctrine of chances ; for " determining from the number of times in which an unknown event has happened and failed, the chance that the probability of its happening in a single trial lies somewhere between any two degrees of probability that may be named." Mr. Price having completed the solution, it was presented by his friend, Mr. Canton, to the Royal Society, in 1763. The author afterwards availed himself of this problem in confuting a part of Mr. Hume's celebrated argument on miracles. This Mr. Bayes is mentioned by our author in a note to his treatise on *Morals* (p. 429, 3rd edit.), as the author of a pamphlet entitled, " *Divine Benevolence ; or an Attempt to prove that the principal end of the Divine Providence and Government is the Happiness of his Creatures.*" He was a dissenting minister at Tunbridge Wells, and is spoken of by Mr. Price as one of the most ingenious men he ever knew.

At this period, Mr. Price led a very uniform course of life, seeing very little of society, except the members of his own congregation, and occupied chiefly with the preparation for his duties as a minister and a preacher. So much was he absorbed in these labours, that he even speaks of the mathematical and scientific pursuits to which he was much attached, and devoted a few spare hours, as a hardly justifiable waste of time. The only variety which

he enjoyed was the occasional company of Dr. Franklin, Mr. Canton, and a few other scientific friends. His own health and that of Mrs. Price were both at this time very delicate and apparently precarious ; a circumstance which in some degree weighed upon his spirits, and added to the disinclination he felt to seek for more varied and extensive society.

In 1762, he was solicited to become one of the tutors of the academy in which he had himself received his education ; and in the following year received an invitation from the congregation in Lewin's Mead, Bristol ; both of which proposals he declined. About the same time he declined an overture from the booksellers, to undertake a complete edition of Sir I. Newton's works. Soon afterwards he reduced some sermons on Prayer into the form of a dissertation, in the hope of rendering them more extensively useful than he was at this time able to make them from the pulpit. This was published, in 1767, along with three others, on Providence, on the Re-union of Virtuous Men in another State, and on Miracles. This volume was from the first, and continues to be, deservedly popular, and has been many times reprinted.

Of these four dissertations, those on Providence and on Miracles have the greatest share of originality. The other two are chiefly of a practical and devotional cast. That on Prayer, as has just been observed, was originally in the form of sermons ; and the same may probably be said of that on the Junction of Virtuous Men

in a Heavenly State. He passes more slightly over the arguments from reason and from Scripture for anticipating such a re-union ; and assuming it as a fact, enlarges in a very eloquent and interesting manner on the delight and advantage which will accompany this renewed intercourse, and the powerful motives which it suggests to a life of holiness, and to the cultivation of such friendships only or chiefly as we may hope to continue hereafter. It is observable, that one serious difficulty unavoidably attendant on this belief is unnoticed by our author ; it is one, indeed, of which the views he entertained of a future state afforded him no satisfactory solution. If the blessed are permitted to recognize their *virtuous* friends, they must also be sensible of the absence of others with whom they had been not less intimately connected by ties of kindred, or of an affection often rendered even more vivid by its painful character, and by the sad conviction that their own exertions to guide them into the right way had been fruitless. They, we think, whose faith is that such backsliders are doomed to an eternity of remediless woe, would gladly hope that the blessed are not to recognize their virtuous friends, if they must also perceive that others, whom they loved with as warm an attachment, are missing. Nor can the cheerless scheme of final destruction, adopted by Dr. Price, afford any promise of effectual consolation. A satisfactory answer to this objection can be given, we think, by those only who believe future punishments to be remedial in

their character, tending to discipline and purify the soul, and bring the wanderers back at length to happiness and heaven.*

Dr. Price's view of Providence is, that all the events which happen in the world, whether of great or small importance in our estimation, alike form a part of the general plan, and are alike necessary to the perfection of the whole. He vindicates this doctrine with great success against the objections often brought against it; shewing that it arises necessarily from the views we are led to take of the Divine perfections, and from what passes under our notice of the frame and constitution of the world, and that it in no degree affects the (popular or practical) liberty of moral agents. This universal providence he conceives to be administered, not, as many imagine, by the original appointment of general laws which have ever since been left to execute themselves, but by the constant and unceasing agency of the same Almighty hand. The Deity acts indeed according to those general principles which we call laws of nature, which are in fact nothing more than the modes of the Divine operations. These are regular and uniform, not through any necessity of nature, but in order that rational and moral agents may be enabled to form consistent plans of conduct, and to derive wisdom from experience. "Some," he thinks, "are led into mistakes on

*This difficulty is nowhere more satisfactorily considered than in a sermon of Mr. Belsham's, entitled "The Future Life of the Righteous, a Social State." But his solution is founded on principles of which our author could not avail himself.

this subject, by thinking of the manner in which it is most becoming the Deity to act, too strictly in conformity to that in which men are obliged to act. They have but little power, and therefore are obliged to be as frugal of it as possible. But there is nothing difficult to the Deity, and consequently there can be nothing to influence him to choose one way of acting rather than another, besides its being more agreeable to rectitude, and more conducive to its end."

It is an obvious objection to this doctrine, that it renders the vices of men equally with their virtues an essential part of the Divine plan, and implies that moral agents are purposely placed in circumstances in which they will *certainly* yield to temptation, and so be lost for ever. Dr. Price's answer to this difficulty will be thought unsatisfactory by many readers. Instead of removing the objection, he seems fairly to admit the view of things on which it is founded, and then endeavours to deny its validity as an objection. But in doing so, he seems wilfully to expose his doctrine to all the difficulties of the necessarian scheme, without availing himself of its advantages; and will hardly be found, in this instance, to have vindicated the ways of God to men. The objection, many will think, can only be removed by denying at once the ground on which it proceeds, and adopting the more consolatory doctrine of universal restoration;—a doctrine, it may not be amiss to add, by no means irreconcilable to that of eternal punishments, if we assume such a definition of punishment as is

alone consistent with correct views of Divine justice and goodness.

The most remarkable feature of the "Dissertation on Miracles," is the analysis of Hume's well-known argument derived from the nature of testimony. "No attested miracle," says he, "can be believed, unless the falsehood of the testimony appear more *miraculous* than the truth of the fact asserted." This principle some of his answerers found to be equivalent to the following: "That no miracle could be received, unless the falsehood of the witnesses was more *improbable* than the truth of their narrative;" and when thus explained, they express no unwillingness to concede it to him.* But Dr. Price goes further, and contends that the inherent improbability of the fact attested, has nothing to do with the grounds of our reliance on testimony. In order to perceive this, it is only necessary to consider how very great is the previous improbability of any the simplest and most ordinary narrative, *antecedent* to the testimony affirming it. It will be found in fact to be such as to exceed all power of computation; and yet such a narrative will be received without hesitation on the report of a single witness of ordinary credibility. If we see reason to think that the witness is credible,—that is, that his character and means of observation render it more likely that he should speak truth than falsehood, we receive his evidence, whatever be the *previous* improbability of the fact narrated. Not that we are always equally ready

* See Campbell on Miracles, part i. sect. 6.

to believe probable and improbable facts ; but our indisposition to receive accounts of the latter class takes place only when the improbability is of such a nature as to lead us to doubt whether the witness *has* the degree of credibility ascribed to him. If it is such as to excite a belief that he has either been deceived himself, or has some motive for deceiving others, we reject his testimony ; but we do so in consequence of *its own* insufficiency, and not of any imagined balancing of opposite probabilities. There can be no such balancing, because in fact the two things are never opposed, and have no connexion with or relation to each other. That Mr. Hume's principle is fallacious, will appear when we consider that it is equally applicable to the evidence of sense. Were we to *see* something quite new and out of the ordinary course of nature, we ought not to believe it, because this would be receiving a fact upon evidence, the falsehood of which would be less uncommon than the fact itself. He therefore, who will guide himself by the principles of this objection, and balance opposite experiences in the manner it requires, must have remained an unbeliever, though he had *seen* the miracles related in the New Testament.

Dr. Price has illustrated this law of evidence with great ability and acuteness ; and seems to have placed it in such a light as to admit of no further question or dispute. But the whole dissertation well deserves a careful study, which we would gladly recommend to some ingenious writers who have recently been engaged in discussing this subject, and who appear to us to

have bewildered themselves by the admission of false principles of reasoning and of evidence, which they may here find effectually refuted.

The following judicious remark occurs at the close of the volume: "It has been objected, that supposing the reality of the miraculous facts of Christianity, there is no connexion between them and the truth of its doctrines. This in my opinion, is to trifle inexcusably; nor can it be worth any Christian's while to say a word in answer to it, till *one* person is found who can honestly declare that he believes the miracles of Christ, but denies his divine mission; that in particular, he is convinced that he raised several persons from the dead, and at last rose himself from the dead and ascended to heaven, and afterwards poured forth on the apostles and first Christians those gifts of the Spirit mentioned in the New Testament, but at the same time doubts whether he said true when he declared, 'I am the resurrection and the life;' or, 'The hour is coming and now is, when all that are in the graves shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.'"

The appearance of these dissertations was the means of bringing Mr. Price into notice, and of introducing him to more extensive and varied society. Among others, the Marquis of Lansdowne, then Earl of Shelburne, sought his acquaintance. At a period of domestic affliction, his attention had been directed to the dissertations on Providence, and on the re-union of virtuous friends after death, by the celebrated

Mrs. Montagu, who had been for some years intimately acquainted with Mr. Price. On a perusal of them, he was so much gratified that he expressed a wish to be introduced to their author. A meeting was accordingly arranged for this purpose at Mr. Price's house at Newington; and thus was laid the foundation of a friendship which knew no interruption to the day of his death. It was doubtless rendered more close and intimate by our author's active support of political principles similar to those of his lordship; but it had nothing of a political character in its outset, and was maintained throughout on a footing of the most perfect independence; for Mr. Price had no favour to ask, either for himself or for others, from his distinguished friend, even when he occupied the most elevated place in the counsels of his sovereign; and in fact the period when Lord Shelburne was so much occupied with official duties unavoidably occasioned an interruption in their frequent intercourse, though none in their mutual confidence and esteem.

About the same time, Mr. Price also formed the acquaintance of the celebrated Lord Lyttleton, whose name was already so honourably connected with similar pursuits and studies by his excellent Essay on the Conversion of St. Paul. The argument of the dissertation on miracles was more immediately directed against that of Mr. Hume on the same subject; but with such an entire absence of the usual seasoning of theological controversy, that *he* also sought a personal interview with the author, which was occasionally repeated with uninterrupted esteem

on both sides. Mr. Hume is said to have acknowledged that some oversights in the argument of his well-known Essay had been successfully exposed; but it does not appear that he made any alteration in consequence in the later editions.

In the year 1769, the University of Aberdeen, out of respect to our author's extraordinary merit, presented him with the diploma of Doctor in Divinity. In the same year appeared the work by which his name is chiefly known to a large portion of the public, who are comparatively indifferent to his fame as a metaphysician and a divine. It is entitled, "Observations on Reversionary Payments; on Schemes for providing Annuities for Widows, and for Persons in Old Age; on the Method of calculating the Value of Assurances on Lives; and on the National Debt, &c." This work was suggested by sundry applications which had been made to the author for his opinion on certain plans in agitation for societies to provide annuities for the widows of professional men and others. Most of these on examination he found had been based on erroneous principles, and the resources they proposed to provide wholly inadequate to meet their engagements. Some of these projects were accordingly abandoned, and others remodelled in conformity with his suggestions. But it appeared that many other schemes had been set on foot from time to time with similar objects, but all in different ways defective, so as ere long to exhaust their funds and end in bankruptcy; thus defrauding the members, who had continued their subscriptions

for a long term of years, of all the advantages they were entitled to expect. Some, possibly the greater part, of these schemes had been devised in ignorance, by ill-judging or oversanguine men, misled perhaps by a few facts hastily collected or imperfectly ascertained, which were rashly made the basis of a general conclusion. But there is reason to fear that others were devised or persisted in from fraudulent motives, by parties well aware of their inadequacy to provide for their own permanence. In either case, however, the mischief was very serious; to those subscribers who had paid their contributions for a series of years, and just at the time when they were expecting to reap the benefit for themselves or their families, found the accumulated savings of a laborious life suddenly dissipated; but still more so to the public at large, in the discouragement of that spirit of forethought, economy, and self-denial, which are so essential, not only to the wealth, but to the happiness of all classes.

It appeared, therefore, that the public was in great want of more accurate information on these subjects, which it was the purpose of this work to communicate. It contains, accordingly, a large collection of most valuable facts, many of them altogether new, and brought to bear on an object of great practical and even national importance. The work was very favourably received; and while it was the means of putting an end to many plausible schemes, which from mere ignorance of just principles in their projectors had been so framed as to lead to nothing but disappointment and ruin—it pointed

out the principles on which these schemes might be so reformed as to be secure, and on which others have since been introduced, which have been the instruments of great and extensive benefit.

The extraordinary prosperity and accumulating capital of some of the first societies which were formed on plans recommended or sanctioned by Dr. Price, have led many to the belief that he was over-cautious; and that the data which were then accessible induced him to estimate the average expectation of life,—especially in large towns and among the well-educated middle classes, who constitute the great bulk of the parties commonly disposed to avail themselves of such institutions,—at too low a rate. It is not improbable that a material change has taken place for the better in these respects since the publication of this treatise, or at least since the period when the greater part of the facts were collected on which its conclusions are based; the consequence of which may be that the plans formed on these data admit of being in some degree modified. On the other hand, there is but too much reason to believe, that the spirit of competition has of late years urged the promoters of rival institutions considerably beyond the limits prescribed by a just regard to their own security, and to the true interests both of the subscribers and of the public. And we are also constrained to acknowledge, that the frightful picture exhibited by some recent statistical inquiries into the condition of our large towns, has tended not a little to damp the com-

placency with which we used to compare ourselves in these respects with our forefathers.

The third chapter of this work treats of Public Credit and of the National Debt; a subject which occupied a large share of the author's attention, and to which he frequently recurred in his later publications, particularly in a pamphlet published in 1772, and devoted expressly to it, entitled "An Appeal to the Public on the Subject of the National Debt." There is reason to believe that he exercised a considerable influence in rousing the public attention to this momentous subject, and it is understood that the measures afterwards brought forward, under the auspices of Mr. Pitt, for paying off the National Debt, or rather of transferring it to the state by means of a sinking fund accumulating at compound interest, were for the most part in fact suggested by him.

With respect to the general principle which Dr. Price has taken so much pains to inculcate, of the impolicy of anticipating the national resources by contracting debts in perpetuity, there can hardly be two opinions. Nor can it be questioned that if this system is continued indefinitely, and no precautionary measures are taken, a time must come, sooner or later, when the course which this country has now pursued to such an unprecedented extent will be practicable no longer. If that time should ever arrive, a *crisis* must ensue, the nature and results of which it is impossible to predict; but whatever may be the final issue, we cannot easily imagine that the *immediate*

effect should be otherwise than disastrous in a high degree. The experience of another half century has however served to shew that Dr. Price, and other political writers of that time, greatly under-rated the resources of this country. To what extent those who, in their present attempts to estimate the probable events and prospects of the coming age, give way to similar forebodings will prove to have been equally misled, time only can shew. In the view which our author has given in this essay of the principle and mode of operation of the sinking fund, there is good reason to think that he materially deceived himself; but at all events, he has used language which tended to deceive the public into the indulgence of false and most unreasonable expectations. Most of those readers who were not familiar with financial operations, and not a few who might have been expected to know better, were certainly possessed with a notion of we know not what miracles that were to be wrought by the mysterious process of compound interest; as though millions of debt were to be worked off, they knew not how or why, by a sort of juggle of figures. Dr. Price himself seems to undertake in one place, that a debt of a hundred millions shall be paid off in a century, by the mere annual vote of a hundred thousand pounds; forgetting, or at least not adverting to, the important fact, that during the *whole* of this period the interest due on the *whole* of this vast sum must continue to be paid by the nation; and must be added, with all the accumulation accruing from year to year on each successive

annual payment, to the above apparently moderate appropriation. That there was some fallacy involved in these statements, might naturally be suspected from the startling and paradoxical inferences deduced from them. Thus it is represented as very bad policy to borrow money at a low rate of interest; or to convert a funded debt bearing a high rate of interest into another at a lower rate. Our author even recommends, that in time of war, when the national expenditure exceeds the income, the deficit should be supplied by contracting fresh loans, in preference to suspending the operations of the sinking fund; a policy which was accordingly acted upon to a very considerable extent during the war of the French revolution. It is now sufficiently well understood, that no real advantage can be obtained by paying off a debt with one hand, while a new incumbrance of equal amount is incurred with the other. The only way in which a debt can be really and effectually discharged, in the case either of an individual or of a nation, is by applying a portion of capital to that purpose, or by an excess of income over expenditure; and, in either case, the simplest and most direct procedure is at once the cheapest and the best. But to enter more fully into the details of a subject like this, would be foreign to the object of the present work.

In another part of this treatise, Dr. Price enters largely into the discussion of a question much agitated by the statistical writers of his day respecting the population of this country. In the absence of any actual enumeration or

other direct evidence, they were obliged to depend chiefly on inferences derived by circuitous reasoning from various indications supposed to be connected with the fact they wished to ascertain ; and as might be expected, under such circumstances, the opinions maintained were very various. Dr. Price takes great pains to shew that the country could not, at that time, contain more than five millions, or at most more than five millions and a half of people ; and gives an alarming view of the rapid depopulation which he supposed to be going on, owing to the growth of large towns, the spread of luxury, the (supposed) discouragement of agriculture, &c. It is needless to add, that the periodical enumerations which have since been made, have entirely set aside these conclusions, and have shewn how precarious the deductions often are which the political arithmetician derives by indirect reasoning, even from data, to all appearance well and carefully ascertained.

In January, 1770, Dr. Price accepted an invitation from the congregation assembling at the Gravel-pit Meeting, Hackney. He still continued, however, to reside at Newington Green, and retained his connexion as afternoon preacher to the congregation at that place.

At this period, notwithstanding his anxious forebodings with respect to the financial and political prospects of the country, Dr. Price enjoyed in private life, an unusual share of peaceful tranquillity. His own health, as well as that of Mrs. Price, though at no time robust, was considerably improved ; his occupations, whether in private study, or in public

labours both in the service of his congregation and in a more extended field of action, were suited to his taste and talents,—cheered by a consciousness of promoting, not without success, the most important interests of mankind, and rewarded by a rapidly-increasing reputation among all those whose good opinion was of any real value. This reputation, joined to his own amiable character, unassuming disposition, and readiness to impart to others from his own copious stores of knowledge, rendered his society particularly attractive to a select circle of friends, comprising several of the most distinguished persons of his time, and of high eminence, both for literature and science.

Dr. Price was now also led to assume a more prominent station among his dissenting brethren. As a leading member of the body of dissenting ministers in and near London, he took an active part in the exertions which were made at this period to procure a removal of the restrictions which still accompanied the measure of religious liberty accorded by the act of toleration. He was one of the committee chosen to conduct the application to parliament, for relief from the obligation laid by that act on dissenting ministers, to subscribe the doctrinal articles of the Church of England. A large proportion of them it is true, had for a long time neglected or refused to comply with this requisition; and of these, few, if any, had been visited with any penalty in consequence. But still, as long as the letter of the law remained on the statute-book, they were indebted for their immunity only to the forbearance or

neglect of its administrators, and to the more liberal spirit of the times. When this subscription was at length exchanged for a simple declaration "that they were Christians and protestants, receiving the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the rule of their faith and practice," Dr. Price was one of a small minority who were for refusing the acceptance of this enlargement of their liberties, on the ground that though the declaration required was one which they could conscientiously subscribe, it was objectionable as implying an acknowledgment of what they denied *in toto*, that the civil magistrate had a right to interfere at all in matters of conscience.

But the political atmosphere was now beginning to assume a lowering aspect. A contest was impending, big with the most momentous results, not to this country only, but to the whole civilized world, which it is not to be supposed that a man like Dr. Price could have viewed with indifference, though he had not been led by personal attachment and regard for some of the most distinguished actors, to take a deep interest in the struggle. The disputes in which the infatuated administration of this country had engaged with the American colonies, were now rapidly verging to the civil war, which ended in their acknowledgment as free and independent states. Dr. Price, as may be supposed, united on this occasion with those who protested against the injustice and impolicy of these proceedings; and not contented with sitting by, a mere spectator of the strife, he offered his thoughts on the subject to

the public in a pamphlet, entitled "Observations on Civil Liberty, and on the Justice and Policy of the War with America." In this publication, after a luminous and philosophical view of the nature and general principles of civil liberty, he proceeds to apply these principles to the great national question of the day; and demonstrates with irresistible force of reasoning, and in calm and unimpassioned though most impressive language, that the impending war with America was inconsistent with the spirit and principles of the British constitution, with the dictates of policy and humanity, and with the true honour of the kingdom. At the commencement of this fearful contest, he also points out, with a truly prophetic spirit, many reasons for looking forward to no other result for this country but a disgraceful defeat.

As far as the argument of this able and powerful production is founded on the general principles of moral justice and humanity, which ought ever to guide the proceedings of nations as well as of individuals, nothing can be more complete and conclusive. But when he turns to matters of trade and finance, we perceive the influence of views which had from the first directed the commercial and colonial policy of this country, which at that time were still generally prevalent, and in fact were admitted by both parties, but whose fallacy has since been clearly exposed by Adam Smith and other able political writers. Few persons accordingly would now be found to advocate the retaining of colonies in a state of dependence, merely in order to confine them to an exclusive commerce

with the mother country, which was thus to be enriched by a favourable balance of trade. And the event has happily proved our author to have been a false prophet in his melancholy forebodings of national ruin to result from the independence of America. This great change could not in the nature of things have been deferred much longer; and experience has now shewn, that the rapid growth and prosperity of that powerful nation has been much more beneficial to this country than dependent colonies bound down to an exclusive intercourse with the parent state could ever have been. Happy would it have been for both parties, happy for the world, if that separation, which was become really desirable for England as well as for America, could have been brought about in a spirit of mutual friendship and good-will, each considering the other as a branch from the same common stock, and formed into a distinct community only because it was the arrangement most conducive to the good government and prosperity of the whole. But such spectacles as these we fear are not yet to be looked for, even among civilized, enlightened, and Christian nations; and we must be satisfied when, as in this instance, we behold the passions and follies of men leading, under the guidance of a wise Providence, through much intermediate mischief and destruction, to a result of final preponderating good.

This publication was eagerly and universally read, and made a very powerful impression, though unhappily it was not so far successful as to rouse an effectual opposition to the impoli-

tic and iniquitous measures which it denounced. Amidst the great number of private congratulations which he received on having so well supported the cause of liberty, he was gratified in a more public manner by having the freedom of the city of London presented to him in a gold box, by the aldermen and common council, "as a testimony of their approbation of his principles, and of the high sense which they entertained of the excellence of his observations on the justice and policy of the war with America." Nor was his popularity confined to this country. On the western side of the Atlantic it so far prevailed, that these observations, in conjunction with another celebrated but less temperate pamphlet, were believed to have had no inconsiderable effect in determining the Americans to declare their independence.*

In 1777, Dr. Price pursued the same argument in a second pamphlet, entitled "Additional Observations on Civil Liberty and the War with America," dedicated to the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and commons of the city of London. This publication also was widely and extensively read.

That these exertions of Dr. Price, combined with his general eminence and worth, procured for him a powerful influence with the most active promoters of American independence, will readily be imagined. It even appears that the Congress were at one time anxious to prevail on him to become a citizen of the United States, and to assume the direction of their finances. A formal resolution to the above effect was transmitted to him by Messrs. Franklin,

* Morgan's Life of Price, p. 62.

Lee and Adams, then ambassadors from the United States to the Court of France. Dr. Price, as might be expected, declined the proposal, which in fact would have been ill suited to his habits and character; but added expressions of the warmest gratitude for the notice taken of him, assuring them that he looked to the United States as now the hope, and likely soon to become the refuge, of mankind.

Such expressions as these might lead us to presume that he would watch with the deepest interest and solicitude the progress of this great experiment, fraught, as he justly conceived it to be, with results of such mighty importance to the general welfare of all nations; and at the close of their arduous struggle, when they had at length succeeded in extorting from the government of this country the acknowledgment of their independence, he published "An Address to the People of the United States," containing observations on the importance of the American revolution, and much valuable advice on the best means of securing those liberties for which they had successfully contended. To that part of it which urged them to devote themselves to agriculture, to the exclusion of manufactures and foreign trade, they have paid but little regard; whether they have judged wisely, it may not be so easy to determine.

In the following year, 1778, Dr. Price was engaged in an amicable controversy with his friend, Dr. Priestley, on the important metaphysical questions of materialism and necessity. A peculiar interest is attached to this remarkable discussion, not merely from the

nature of the questions in dispute, and the ability of the disputants, but from its furnishing a rare exception to the violent and acrimonious spirit which such controversies too commonly display. Both parties had embraced decided opinions on the points in debate; they were zealous in asserting and maintaining them, and had estimated very highly the practical value of their respective views, and yet they exhibit an edifying example of the possibility of combining zeal with charity, and a warm assertion of opposing sentiments with unabated personal esteem and friendship.

This friendly correspondence was occasioned by the appearance of Dr. Priestley's "Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit," and his "Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity;" copies of which he had sent to Dr. Price, in common with several other friends, in order that he might have the benefit of their remarks in an Appendix. On the receipt of Dr. Price's first remarks, his solicitude to secure at least one friendly opponent amidst so many angry ones, led him to propose that they should engage in a more detailed correspondence which might be published in a distinct and separate form. To this Dr. Price assented, and has accordingly shewn great zeal and ability in vindicating the positions attacked by his friend. This at least will be admitted, we apprehend, by all; with what success he has done it, will probably in this, as in most other instances, be estimated differently by different readers, according to the side of the question which they are themselves disposed to favour.

To attempt a full account of this able and interesting, but somewhat desultory and prolix discussion, would lead us into details scarcely consistent with the nature of the present work. The points in dispute were chiefly three; the peculiar views entertained by Dr. Priestley on the constitution of matter,—the nature of mind or spirit,—and the doctrine of necessity. In conformity with a theory suggested by the ingenious Boscovich, Dr. Priestley supposed that the various phenomena of external nature might be accounted for by means of certain powers of attraction and repulsion emanating from different centres, and mutually influencing and modifying each other, according to laws depending on the distances and relative position of these centres of force. It is not easy to make this theory intelligible; but it is generally agreed that it may be adjusted to the phenomena of the material world in such a manner as to afford a consistent *statement* of the facts, though not in any proper sense of the word to *account* for them. But granting that this could be done, it was well argued by Dr. Price, that a theory was very incomplete which spoke only of *powers*, without stating, either by what, or upon what, those powers were exercised. It might have been added, that we cannot easily conceive of power at all, except as the attribute of a being possessed of consciousness and intelligence, capable of discerning the circumstances which should influence its exercise, the laws by which it is to be directed, and the ends which it is proposed to accomplish. If this be the case, a theory which

resolves all the phenomena of the external world into the results of certain powers or forces, as our author has hinted, may go far to convince us that there is no such thing as matter, but does not bring us nearer to explaining the nature of mind, whose qualities bear no more perceivable relation to attraction or repulsion, than they do to the solidity and inertia usually represented as the essence of matter.

With respect to the second question on the nature of mind, which Priestley maintained to be nothing more than a result of the organization of the brain, his ingenious opponent must be allowed to have given him a considerable advantage in the argument, by the concession that spirit possessed extension, locality, and consequently figure; all which properties, it was justly contended, had as little to do with the peculiar functions of mind as solidity, and equally involved the possibility of that division and separation of parts, which is often represented as inconsistent with the supposed unity of the thinking principle. The fact however may be, that this is a speculation beyond the reach of the human faculties. All we can know of the subject is, that as objects of human study, extension, figure, and motion, the qualities of matter, are essentially different from sensation and thought, the qualities or operations of mind, which alone possess any real importance or practical application, and of which alone we can in either case take cognizance. On this point there is reason to think that all parties in the theoretical controversy will be entirely agreed.

On the third question, relating to the doc-

trine of necessity, there is good reason to think that there was less real difference of opinion between the disputants than might at first have been imagined. Dr. Price expresses the greatest dread and dislike of this doctrine, which ascribes all events to the direct appointment of Divine Providence,—and yet he professes his belief that “no event comes to pass which it would have been proper to exclude, and that relatively to the Divine plan and administration, all is right.” “Between this doctrine,” says his opponent in reply, “and those naked views of necessity at which Dr. Price is so much alarmed, I see no real difference. When a person can once bring himself to think that there is no wickedness of man which it would have been proper to exclude, and that the divine plan requires this wickedness, as well as every thing else that actually takes place, I wonder much that he should hesitate to admit that the Divine Being might expressly appoint that without which his scheme could not have been right, but must have been wrong.”

Similar concessions are made by Dr. Price in yet more decided terms in some of his other publications; as for instance, in the following passage of his first work on the principal questions in morals: “By the necessity which is said to diminish the merit of good actions must be meant not a *natural* but a *moral* necessity, or such as arises from the influence of motives and affections on the mind, or that certainty of determining one way, which may take place on supposition of certain views, circumstances and

principles of an agent. Now, it is undeniable, that the very greatest necessity of this sort is consistent with, nay is implied in, the idea of the most perfect and meritorious virtue; and consequently, can by no means lessen it. The more confidently we can depend on a being's doing an action, when convinced of its propriety, whatever obstacles may lie in his way; that is, the more efficacious and unconquerable the influence of conscience is within him, the more amiable we must think him. In like manner, the most abandoned and detestable state of wickedness, implies the greatest necessity of sinning, and the greatest degree of moral impotence. Every idea therefore of liberty must be very erroneous, which makes it inconsistent with the most absolute and complete certainty of the kind I have now taken notice of, or which supposes it to overthrow all steadiness of character and conduct."*

After such concessions as these, it is not easy to see what point of difference there could be left between the parties worth contending for, and we might wonder that a controversy should still have been maintained, did not experience sufficiently shew that the earnestness of disputation is often *inversely* proportioned to the intrinsic importance of the questions in debate. After all, by far the most interesting feature in this discussion, certainly was the fact, that notwithstanding the great stress laid on their respective opinions by both these ex-

* Review, &c. p. 358. See also Dissertation on Providence, section 1.

cellent persons, their mutual regard and esteem continued unabated ; and the debate, in no instance, betrays either party into a single expression which, after the warmth and excitement of controversy had subsided, he would wish to blot.

During the remainder of the American war, Dr. Price was for the most part a silent, though of course a deeply interested and most anxious spectator of the fearful course of passing events. He was chiefly occupied by the discharge of his ordinary duties as a Christian minister, and in the general intercourse of society, not only in his own immediate circle, but among the most eminent of every rank and station, with whom talents, virtue, and well-earned reputation were objects of esteem and value. His attention was also much engaged by the extensive and varied correspondence in which his eminence in so many different lines inevitably involved him, and which he often complained of as a severe tax upon his time. His hours of study were frequently broken in upon by applications for assistance and advice, especially in matters relating to annuities and life assurances ; and in this way he sacrificed much of his valuable time to persons who had no claim upon him and of whom he knew but little. The consciousness however, that he was thus frequently enabled to render important services to the public, and above all to those who had no means of purchasing such assistance, was of more value in his estimation than any pecuniary recompense. This he probably considered, as it surely was, the best kind of charity

that it was in his power to bestow. Not that he was niggardly in respect of other more ordinary forms of beneficence. Having no family of his own, he is said to have devoted not less than a fifth part of his income to purposes of this kind; and to have been anxiously careful to distribute it in such a way as to be of the greatest real service.

It was Dr. Price's custom to observe the annual fast days appointed by public proclamation during the American war; on which occasions he did not hesitate to make the passing events the theme of such reflections as were suitably addressed to a congregation assembled for worship on the principles of the gospel of peace. Two of these sermons were published by him in 1779 and 1781.

In the year 1786, Dr. Price made his first and only appearance in the arena of dogmatic theology, by the publication of a volume of sermons, one half of which are devoted to a review of some of the different opinions which have prevailed concerning the person and office of Christ, and the nature of his agency in accomplishing our salvation. He first gives a view of the Christian doctrine as held by all sects and parties, for the purpose of shewing that the diversities of opinion, which have been the grief and scandal of some and the triumph of others in every age, notwithstanding the mischiefs they have undoubtedly produced in bitter controversies and unchristian feelings and conduct, ministering occasions of scoffing to the sceptic, and no small perplexity to the minds of many good men, do not affect the

main and essential points of the Christian revelation, in the unity, perfections, and providence of God,—in the character, office, and mediation of Christ,—and eternal life, as the gift of his heavenly Father through him, to all his faithful disciples. Having thus enumerated the important points in which all Christians practically and professedly agree, (though it may appear difficult occasionally to reconcile some of them with the distinguishing tenets of various parties), he proceeds to give an account of the different views maintained by the leading sects on certain questions which have in almost all ages been the subjects of vehement controversies and sectarian bitterness and strife. The questions which he particularly refers to are those relating, first to the nature of the Deity; secondly, to the nature and consequences of that fall of man which brought us into our present state; thirdly, the nature and dignity of Christ,—and fourthly, the nature of that interposition of Christ by which he is the Saviour of the world. He begins with the tenets maintained on these questions by the followers of Athanasius and of Calvin, of which he gives an unvarnished statement, chiefly derived from the language of the authorized standards. At the same time that he declares his own disapprobation of these systems, he cautions his hearers against uncharitable conclusions or feelings towards those who maintain them, leading us to ascribe to them universally the absurd or immoral inferences which appear to us unavoidably to flow from their principles, and which may in truth be legitimately dedu-

cible from them. Many, he doubts not, who in conformity with their doctrinal views, think of Unitarians or Arminians as destined to the regions of eternal woe, will rejoice hereafter to meet in a better place those whom they could not here acknowledge as Christian brethren. And he justly points it out as a most important recommendation of our principles, that they tend to open our hearts to all about us, and enable us consistently to regard with equal satisfaction and pleasure our neighbours, friends, and acquaintances, who manifest in their lives and conversation the genuine fruits of the spirit, be their modes of worship or their systems of doctrine what they may.

He then turns to what he calls the other *extreme* of Christian doctrine in the system of Socinus; which name, it should be observed, he gives to all those who agree in holding the simple humanity of Christ; though fully aware of, and acknowledging the essential difference between some of the opinions of Socinus, and those espoused by any class of Unitarians at the present day. It is abundantly evident, however, that he himself approaches much nearer to this *extreme* than to that which he had previously described; not merely in his doctrinal views, but more especially in the sentiments and more comprehensive spirit which have for the most part actuated its professors. He first gives a statement of those distinguishing points of this system as compared with orthodoxy in which he expresses his own cordial agreement; the enumeration of which he adds, "is enough to shew that there is no rea-

son for that aversion with which many good men think of this scheme of Christianity. While its advocates admit all the facts just recited relating to the doctrine of our salvation by Christ, and therefore all that any good man need be very anxious about, they reject the common modes of interpreting this doctrine, and particularly the opinion that he saved us by making satisfaction to the justice of the Deity for our sins, and by suffering in himself the very punishment due to sinners, in order to let them go free. He died for us, they say, not as a *substitute*, but as one man dies for another when he gives up his life to serve him. He died, not to reconcile *God* to us, but, on the contrary, to assure us of God's love, and to induce *us* to be reconciled to God. He was a sacrifice and a Redeemer, not by offering an equivalent or paying down a price, but by devoting himself in the cause of truth and virtue, and by sealing the covenant of grace, and the promise of pardon which he published with his blood."*

In the next discourse, Dr. Price enters at large into a statement of the *Arian* doctrine of the pre-existence and dignity of Christ, with the reasons which induce him to prefer it as a sort of medium between the extremes he had before described. When, however, we give it the above name, it should be observed that Dr. Price's view differs materially, both from the Arian doctrine properly so called, and from the opinions maintained by Clarke and others in later times, who are usually looked upon as

* Sermons, p. 79.

the chief advocates of this system. He believes Christ to have been a great pre-existent spirit ; and to have been an agent in the creation of *this* world,—meaning our globe and its dependencies,—but does not think himself called on to extend these creative functions beyond this comparatively narrow range ; though the texts usually quoted to this purpose, if they relate to the formation of the material world at all, give no hint of any such limitation. Neither does he conceive himself authorized, along with the generality of Arians both in ancient and in modern times, to pray to Christ, or to offer him any other divine honours ; on the contrary, he uses on this subject the language of strict Unitarianism, confining all divine worship to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and obeying the command of him who said, “in that day ye shall ask me nothing.”

Dr. Price's views of the mediatorial office of Christ are not very distinctly explained. He repudiates in the most decided terms the Calvinistic doctrine of satisfaction, but speaks in somewhat vague language of an intrinsic demerit in sin, which, independent of consequences, renders punishment proper ; a propriety which is increased by the necessity of vindicating the honour of God's broken laws. The mere penitence and reformation of the offender does not, in his opinion, remove these reasons for punishment ;*—nor (it might have been added) does it appear in what way an efficacy to this purpose can be ascribed to the

* Sermons, p. 176.

death of Christ, on any principle except that which he so decidedly rejects, of vicarious punishment and imputed righteousness. If it be true, as our author seems to intimate, that there is in the nature of things an inherent connexion between sin and punishment, which even the repentance and reformation of the sinner, however real and sincere, is not sufficient to dissolve,—it is not easy to understand in what way the sufferings and death of our Redeemer, however meritorious in themselves, can remove the liability, unless on the supposition—the *fiction*, we must be allowed to call it—which transfers both the merit and the suffering (considered in the light of a punishment for former offences) from one person to another. But this is a notion altogether disclaimed by Dr. Price; who contends for nothing more than a supposed efficacy in the mediation of Christ, not only to *announce*, but to *obtain* and procure for man that pardon and remission for repented sins which is assured to us in the covenant of grace. It is not impossible, as we have elsewhere had occasion to remark,* that this hypothesis (for it is nothing more) when fairly stated, and divested of its connexion with a dubious ethical system, may be found to involve little to which a rational and reflecting mind would see cause to object.

It was to be expected that these discourses, coming from such a quarter, would draw the attention of Dr. Priestley, even if he had not been we may almost say challenged to it, by

* See vol. i. p. 325.

the frequent direct references in the notes to his opinions and arguments. Accordingly, the "Vindication of Unitarianism for 1786" contained a series of letters to Dr. Price, examining his view and defence of the Arian scheme, and the account he has given of the design of Christ's mission. In an appendix to the second edition, Dr. Price replied to some of his friend's objections, while in some instances he acknowledged their force, and to a certain extent modified his original statements. The high respect and esteem which these distinguished men entertained for each other, and the admirable example they had already exhibited in a friendly controversy on a different subject, might lead the reader to anticipate that nothing would pass on this occasion inconsistent with the true spirit of Christian charity. And in this expectation he will not be disappointed.

Some readers indeed have been so much habituated to the ordinary *seasoning* of theological controversy, that they have complained of its absence in these remarkable discussions as flat and insipid. Like the seamen who could not believe that their captain was in earnest if he did not swear at them, they are at a loss to persuade themselves that disputants can be sincere who conduct themselves like gentlemen and Christian brethren; or that they can be otherwise than deficient in a suitable zeal for the truth, who are not carried by it to a breach of charity, and a denial of each other's hopes. To Messrs. Bogue and Bennet, "they appear more like men fencing with foils for a shew of skill, than fighting with swords for their life.

When Dr. Price reasons against the enemies of civil liberty, he burns with indignation against them as the enemies of human happiness. But is not religious truth more important than political verity, and are not its adversaries greater foes to mankind than political heretics? In order to maintain consistency of conduct, ought not Dr. Price to have displayed here at least an equal degree of energy and zeal?"*

We ought not to dismiss this volume without noticing the five sermons which occupy the latter half of it, on the Security and Happiness of a Virtuous Course, on the Goodness of God, and on the Resurrection of Lazarus. These are in fact better known, and have been more extensively read than the others; having been several times reprinted, and extensively circulated. On their merits there cannot be two opinions. The subjects may seem trite, but that is only because they are subjects of universal interest to every Christian audience, and can scarcely fail to be handled by every stated Christian preacher in the ordinary course of his pulpit ministrations. But the reader will not go far in the perusal of these sermons of Dr. Price, without finding that even on such every day topics, as he may call them, many things may be said which are either altogether new, or put in a shape in which he never considered them before.

A few months previous to the publication of these sermons, Dr. Price was visited with a severe domestic affliction in the loss of a wife

* History of Dissenters, ii. 605.

to whom he was tenderly attached, and who is said to have been a lady of a character and disposition well suited to render her a fit companion for such a man. Her health, however, which had always been delicate, had been for some years very infirm, and at length considerably impaired her faculties. Her death, in 1786, though in itself by no means undesirable, was deeply felt and lamented by Dr. Price. But his affliction was that of a good and pious man, whose sorrow was neither that of those who have no hope, nor such as to diminish the interest he always took in whatever tended to promote the welfare and improvement of mankind. Shortly after this event, he removed from Newington to Hackney, where his sister, Mrs. Morgan, assumed the charge of his household.

At this period, the presbyterian dissenters of London and its vicinity, perceiving that since the dissolution of the Warrington Academy, in 1783, there was no longer any place of liberal education in the kingdom conducted on principles which they could altogether approve, determined on attempting the formation of a new institution, in or near the metropolis, on an enlarged and effective scale. With this view, an appeal was made to the dissenters throughout the kingdom, and a very considerable subscription was raised for the purpose. The institution was speedily established at Hackney, and for a few years went on in apparent, but short-lived and delusive prosperity. From the first, Dr. Price took a warm and active interest in its success, and even consented to instruct

the students in the higher branches of the mathematics; a department for which he was eminently qualified as far as attainments were concerned. But it was too late in life for him to enter on the unwonted task and mechanical routine of tuition; and his multiplied engagements of other kinds soon compelled him to withdraw from it. At the second annual meeting of the trustees and friends of the College, he preached an interesting sermon on the evidence for a future period of improvement in the state of mankind, with the means and duty of promoting it. He endeavours to shew that a time is destined sooner or later to arrive on this earth, when the predictions of the universal spread of the gospel and of all the other sources of human happiness and improvement shall be literally fulfilled in all their extent; and he is even sanguine enough to point out a variety of existing circumstances in the then state of philosophy, of civil institutions, and of religion in the more enlightened nations of the Christian world, which in his opinion indicated that such a happy time was advancing. And he makes this prospect the basis of an exhortation to active exertion in giving increased efficiency to every undertaking or project, which tends to develop the principles of improvement, and thus hasten the advent of this glorious and blissful consummation. It is needless to say that many of the appearances in which he read the signs of the times pointing to a rapid and speedy approach of the *millennium*, have proved delusive; and may teach us greater caution in forming our conjectures on the character of

coming events from such indications as we may think we observe passing around us. But the practical conclusion,—the importance of active diligence and zeal in every good work, is only strengthened by the view we are now enabled to take of the power and resources of the enemy, by the consciousness that though much has been done, yet much more remains to be done, before we can even say that we are in sight of the goal—the final object of our labours.

It was the same warm and sanguine temper, manifesting itself even in declining years,—the same disposition to view in the most favourable light every thing which promised to accelerate the march of human improvement,—that led Dr. Price, in common with a great majority of the friends of liberty in England at that time, to hail with the most eager interest the early dawn of the French revolution. They saw in it the legitimate offspring of the American struggle, and they fondly hoped to follow its triumphant progress to the same beneficial results on a larger scale. It is true there were from the first indications of a less encouraging nature, which might have led the cautious observer to foreboding apprehensions, and to a suspicion that the dawn which seemed so fair and promising was not the prelude of a bright and cloudless day. Still we can sympathize with those who formed their expectations according to their wishes, and who looked forward with eager hope to a time at no great distance, when England and regenerated France were to become natural friends and allies, no longer animated by any other rivalry or emulation, but

which should make the most rapid and successful advances in the arts of peace, in cultivating and diffusing all useful knowledge, in establishing free and enlightened institutions, and in promoting the peace and general happiness of mankind. It was their earnest desire, not to watch with a cold and suspicious jealousy the progress, not always free from disturbance, of a mighty nation assuming for the first time the attitude of freedom, but rather to cheer them in the arduous struggle with the voice of affectionate sympathy, to afford them the benefit of our experience, and even to assist them, if possible, to improve upon our institutions, and to cause the torch of liberty to burn in their hands with a still brighter and purer flame.

Such were the feelings very generally prevalent at this period among the patriots and philanthropists of England. They were feelings in which none participated more ardently than Dr. Price; and the respect attached to his age, his talents, and his virtues, enabled him to take a more leading and prominent part in their public expression than commonly falls to the lot of a man in his comparatively humble station. It was in this spirit that he preached his celebrated sermon on the love of our country, addressed to the Society for Commemorating the Revolution in 1688; the peroration of which, anticipating what were then the expected glories of liberty in France, is a most splendid burst of eloquence, and is said to have excited in the audience an enthusiasm seldom witnessed on such an occasion. Every one knows that this discourse, when it afterwards appeared from

the press, was received in various quarters with a very different spirit; and proved the stimulating occasion, though not perhaps absolutely speaking the cause, of an outbreak of hostility to the new order of things, venting itself in the most frightful predictions of mischief and ruin shortly to ensue, and in rancorous abuse of the friends and abettors of French liberty in England.

The leader of this hostile party was the celebrated Edmund Burke, who, in his "Reflections on the Revolution in France," introduced a vehement invective against our author, denouncing him as a political divine, a preacher of sedition, and the patron and defender of all the excesses of the turbulent and sanguinary mob of Paris; which, it is too true, had already drawn many a sigh from the sober-minded well-wishers to the rising cause. As to the prediction of approaching convulsions, it cannot be denied that it was but too quickly and fatally accomplished; but there is also reason to think that the spirit of jealousy and enmity which it encouraged,—the unfounded alarm which was excited, not merely in this country but in the other nations of Europe, at the progress of new institutions in France,—and, above all, the coalition to which it led with the arbitrary powers of the continent to coerce a mighty people struggling to be free, rendered it in a great measure instrumental to its own fulfilment.

The pain and mortification of witnessing this lamentable reverse, Dr. Price was happily spared. He persevered, however, through the short re-

mainder of his life, in the assertion of the same liberal and enlightened sentiments; of which none can doubt the sincerity, as they existed in his own breast, whatever we may now find ourselves constrained to think of some whom he then hailed as friends of liberty, and whom he would gladly have cheered in their course, and guided by the suggestions of his own pure and truly Christian spirit. The invectives and abuse which he experienced for his conduct at this period, excited in him little uneasiness. "I have been comforted under it," he says, "by finding myself joined to the City of Paris and the National Assembly of France. I cannot think of employing my time in making replies. Knowing that it has been the labour of my life to promote those interests of liberty, peace, and virtue, which I reckon the best interests of mankind, and believing that I have not laboured quite in vain, I feel a satisfaction that no opposition can take from me, and shall submit myself in silence to the judgment of the public."

But the earthly course and labours of this enlightened patriot and good Christian were now drawing to a close. Towards the end of February, 1791, he was seized with a slow nervous fever, brought on by a cold which he caught in attending the funeral of a friend; and after the symptoms of the fever had disappeared, he was attacked by a severe disorder in the bladder, which had been gradually coming on for ten or twelve years. This disorder he bore with great fortitude and resignation, though it was accompanied with the most ex-

cruciating agonies, till he expired without a groan on the 19th of April, in the 68th year of his age. From the commencement of his illness to his death, his door was surrounded by anxious inquirers after his health, among whom were men of rank and eminence of all persuasions; and at his interment many distinguished public characters shewed their respect for his memory, by joining the long train of mourners who followed the corpse from Hackney to Bunhill-fields burying ground.

His funeral sermon was preached to a crowded audience, by his intimate friend, Dr. Priestley, who pronounced a high and yet discriminating eulogium on his talents and virtues. Dr. Price's character as a philosopher and a political writer, were (if we may so express it) public property; and these of course are not overlooked; but, in addressing himself to the bereaved congregation, the preacher is particularly anxious to dwell on the excellence of his departed friend as a Christian, and more especially as a Christian minister, in which capacity he appeals to them to bear witness that his conscientious diligence was never affected by the variety of his other engagements.

“Did our deceased friend, notwithstanding his attention to politics, neglect any part of his duty as a minister of the gospel, or a member of society in any other respect? You know that he was ever exemplary in them all. Was the strain of his pulpit discourses ever factious? Did they tend to make you discontented with government, or inflame your passions against those who had the administration of it? You

know the contrary. The mild but warm benevolence of his own heart he diffused into yours. It was his business and delight, on all occasions, to inculcate the great duties of piety and resignation to God, and good-will to all men, together with that happy equanimity which prepares the mind for all events, prosperous or adverse, public or private. You could not, I am confident, leave this place, after attending his services in it, without feeling yourselves more meek and placid, more disposed to forbearance and forgiveness than to revenge."

.... "Dr. Price's piety, which is the surest foundation of all virtue, was not less, though it was less conspicuous, than his benevolence. The peculiar fervour of his devotion, ever expressed in the most natural and unaffected manner, you must have constantly observed in the pulpit, and in all his public services of which *prayer* made a part, and the deep sense that he had of the constant presence and providence of God was always apparent in his conversation on religious subjects. But such marks of strong devotional feelings as he discovered when he was under less constraint, in the more private devotions of his family, I have seldom seen in any other person. It was evident to all his acquaintance, that his devotion was both intense and habitual, the idea of God and of his providence being never long absent from his mind. No person well acquainted with Dr. Price could say, that rational sentiments of Christianity are unfriendly to devotion."*

* Discourse on the Death of Dr. Price, p. 11, 18.

The high character which Dr. Price had for many years maintained as a powerful and impressive preacher, led many to hope that a volume or volumes of his sermons would shortly appear from the press. This expectation, however, was not gratified till the year 1816, when a volume of "Sermons on Various Subjects" was published, under the editorship of his nephew, Mr. W. Morgan. It is obvious that posthumous publications of this kind must in general labour under considerable disadvantages, from the want of the author's final corrections, and even from the uncertainty we may sometimes feel whether they contain his latest and most matured opinions. In the present instance, however, no suspicion of this kind can exist; and we cannot doubt that the volume presents a fair specimen of Dr. Price's pulpit compositions. Devoid for the most part of the studied graces of oratory, they are plain, simple, and perspicuous in expression; they abound in general with clear and forcible reasoning, with close and impressive practical applications of the genuine morality of the gospel, explained and enforced on philosophical and truly evangelical principles. It is enough to say of these sermons, that they are worthy of the talents and reputation of their author; and having said this, we may be allowed to express our surprise and regret that they did not obtain a more favourable reception. They certainly have not received so much notice either from the public at large, or from the religious community to which Dr. Price belonged, as his deserved eminence, or their own intrinsic merit,

might have led us to expect. This failure may in part be ascribed to the circumstance of their appearance having been so long delayed. Publications of this kind, whatever may be their real excellence, for the most part rely for their success, in a great measure, on the influence of personal regard and attachment. But, in this instance, the generation had almost been allowed to pass away with whom such considerations could have weight.

The respected editor of this volume had published in the preceding year, "Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Price," from which the materials of the preceding article have been in some measure derived.

A monument has recently been erected to the memory of Dr. Price, in the chapel at Newington Green, with an inscription drawn up by his worthy successor in that pulpit, the Rev. T. Cromwell, F.S.A.

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY.

It will be readily presumed, that in the narrow limits to which we are now confined, it is not our intention to attempt any thing like a detailed memoir of this distinguished person. To do this, on a scale corresponding to that of some of the preceding articles, would alone have occupied the whole, and more than the whole, of our volume. On this account, feeling the utter impossibility of doing justice to the subject, we had proposed at one time to pass over the name altogether. It was thought however, and not without reason, that in a work entitled "Lives of Eminent Unitarians," such an omission would appear strange and unnatural,—and we shall therefore devote our few remaining pages, not to a regular biography of Priestley, but to a slight sketch of the leading outlines of his life, accompanied with a few remarks on the more prominent features of his character; referring our readers to other sources, happily accessible to all who are interested in the subject, from which more full and minute information may be obtained.

Joseph Priestley was born March 13th, 1733, at Fieldhead, near Leeds. His parents were Calvinistic Dissenters; and he was adopted and educated by an aunt, whom he describes as being at the same time a strict Calvinist,

and in all respects one of the most perfect human characters whom it had been his happiness to know. This circumstance in his early life doubtless exercised a beneficial influence on his subsequent character; retaining what was good in a deep sense of the importance of practical religion, and learning by personal observation the possibility of combining the essential graces of the Christian character with erroneous doctrinal views, he was enabled on his own part to combine an earnest love of truth and zeal to promote its diffusion, with that candour which can see and acknowledge the spirit of genuine Christianity in connexion with every mode of faith.

In 1752 he was sent to the academy at Daventry, an institution then conducted on an imperfect plan, but on principles which afforded considerable facilities to a student accustomed to independent occupation, and prepared to inquire and think for himself. Here he adopted the Arian opinions, which he retained till the reading of "Lardner on the Logos" effected a further change. He also composed at the academy the greater part of his "Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion." His first settlement was with a small orthodox congregation at Needham Market, in Suffolk, from whence after three years he removed to Nantwich, in Cheshire. But in 1761 he was called to a more important and conspicuous station, as one of the tutors of the Warrington Academy, in which capacity he greatly distinguished himself, and acquired a high and rapidly extending reputation. The publication of his first great

work, "The History of Electricity," at this period established his claim to an eminent rank among the votaries of natural science.

In 1767 Dr. Priestley quitted the academy and settled at Leeds, where he remained for six years as minister of the numerous and respectable congregation at Mill-hill, in that town. He now applied with redoubled ardour to theological studies; and the public were quickly enabled to judge of the result of his labours, by the appearance of his "Institutes," and many valuable papers in the "Theological Repository," which was conducted under his superintendence. But it was a remarkable feature of his mind, that his attention was never wholly engrossed by any one pursuit. An accident in a brewery, near his house at Leeds, was the means of drawing his attention more particularly to chemical researches; and thus led the way to that series of brilliant discoveries which for many years seemed to render the rise and progress of pneumatic chemistry almost identical with the scientific career of Priestley.

In 1773 he was induced to quit his station at Leeds for the post of librarian and literary companion to Lord Shelburne; a position, in many respects, as different as could well be imagined, and which it might be supposed that his early education, his rank in life, his habitual freedom of thought and plainness of expression, would have combined to render neither suitable nor agreeable to him. In this connexion, however, he remained for about seven years, continuing all that time, without intermission, his favourite pursuits and studies in natural science,

theology and metaphysics; some of which, especially the latter, were perhaps more obnoxious than those in which he had previously been engaged; and, as he gradually rose more and more into public notice, directed against him an increasing share of popular prejudice and obloquy. Here too, he began to appear prominently before the world in the character of a controversial writer, in an examination of the principles of Dr. Reid, Dr. Beattie, and Dr. Oswald with respect to their doctrine of "common sense." Of this work the author afterwards observes:—"Though written in a manner I do not entirely approve, it has, I hope, upon the whole been of service to the cause of free enquiry and truth."—It must certainly be admitted, that there are in this work occasional expressions which may excite regret, though none which represent his opponents in terms more disparaging than those which they had themselves applied to the most eminent and illustrious philosophers of preceding times.

We may take this opportunity of introducing a few remarks on Dr. Priestley's character as a controversialist; a character in which alone a large portion of the public have any knowledge of him, or rather, are accustomed to think of him; for even on this point, as on most others, by far the greater number have no real knowledge, but are contented to allow their opinions to be formed for them, and to receive implicitly the reports of others. The polemical character of a considerable portion of Dr. Priestley's writings has been made the subject of undistinguishing, and as we think exaggerated

complaint, not only by his opponents, but in a certain degree also, as it appears to us, by many of his warmest admirers. It is not unusual for the one party to censure with vehemence, and for the other to acknowledge with regret the *asperity* by which they are said to be peculiarly distinguished. Now it cannot be denied that passages of this description are to be found in his works. He was a remarkably rapid, and sometimes a precipitate writer, and generally composed his controversial pieces when influenced by the excitement of the occasion which gave them birth; but those who fairly examine his voluminous writings will not find themselves obliged to concede the charge to any thing like the extent in which it is usually advanced. However severely he may think it necessary to censure the *doctrine* of his adversaries, or the tone of arrogant self-sufficiency in which they have not unfrequently expressed it, he never brings into question their integrity or good intentions, and conducts himself throughout, as an earnest, and perhaps sometimes too vehement, but yet as an honourable and fair opponent. Even when his indignation and contempt are at their height, he never descends to personal abuse, or adopts a style which is unsuitable either to the scholar or the gentleman. He was not in general the first aggressor; and there are few instances in which the account is not much more than balanced by the violence and bigotry of his antagonists, from whose pages it would be easy to select passages which we might safely challenge any one to parallel in the whole range of Priestley's polemical writings.

Few of them fail to call in question his motives, and to blacken his character as a man and a christian ; while he is on all occasions desirous as much as possible to keep the person of his opponent out of view, in the examination of his doctrine. On the other hand, there are several highly pleasing specimens of controversy conducted in a very different, and much more satisfactory spirit ; of which we have already had occasion to notice one remarkable example in his correspondence with Dr. Price.

From our author's part of this correspondence, it will more especially appear that his views of the disputable points of metaphysical philosophy, (in common indeed with everything else which strongly engaged his attention) were intimately connected with the most elevated principles of morality and religion. With him the doctrine of necessity was no system of blind fatalism, but was inseparably combined with the most exalted conceptions of the attributes and providence of God ; and the practical results which he derives from this combination, far from tending, as many have imagined, to degrade the nature of man to the condition of a mere machine, 'chained to the foot of fate,' are rather fitted to elevate, refine and spiritualize the soul, and to suggest higher notions of its dignity and future destination. It may be added, that these speculations, as well as all his published writings of a practical nature, lead us to think of the author, as he undoubtedly was, a man deeply imbued with a devotional spirit. It may not have manifested itself in warm and rapturous expressions, because these were not conformable to the pre-

vailing bent of his mind ; but resulted from the calm conviction of his understanding. It was not a passing or occasional passion, but a permanent and calm affection, “with temperate joys in even tide, that rarely ebb or flow.” Its influence on his own mind appears in short to have closely resembled that which he so well recommends to others in his excellent Sermon on Habitual Devotion ;—one of the most valuable tracts of a practical and devotional character which we possess.

We have thought it necessary to advert to this subject more particularly, because it has been too much overlooked and misunderstood, not merely by those who think of Priestley only as the powerful opponent of modes of faith with which their own devotional feelings are closely interwoven, but by some who agreed with him in the most important of his theological opinions. His controversial works naturally attracted a much larger share of the public attention ; and it is from these that the estimate of his character as a moral and religious man has too often been exclusively formed ;—but nothing can be more erroneous than the allegation that he was “constitutionally deficient in moral enthusiasm and deep feeling, or, from these and other reasons, not fitted to spread warmth and earnestness around him, or to exhibit Christianity in its most quickening form.”

One of the most remarkable features of Dr. Priestley’s intellectual character was the extraordinary *versatility* of his talents, and the ease with which he could pass from one pursuit to another, even at times when the important

controversies in which he was engaged might have been expected to engross his thoughts. This facility of transition was one cause of his accomplishing so much, as it enabled him, by diversifying his occupations, to render one employment a relaxation from another. Not that he was ever entirely absorbed by his varied engagements;—his life was very far from being spent in his study; on the contrary he was accustomed to give as much time to the ordinary intercourse of society as is usual with most men who have important business on their hands.

As a man of science, it has been thought, and perhaps with truth, that he was more remarkable for quickness and facility of combination than for profound thought or close and accurate reasoning, and more successful in striking out new and brilliant views, than in following them out to precise and exact results. When he had discovered a new, or apparently new, phenomenon, he had no idea of waiting till he had matured a regular theory on the subject, but immediately made known his observations to the world. Perhaps the next day he might find that his first impression was wrong; and this also he would publish without delay; regarding the correction of his mistake simply as another new fact which might be of use to other inquirers. He wrote too much and too rapidly to have time for studying the graces of composition; but his style, though not to be called elegant, was always perspicuous;—in fact, it may be doubted whether he ever printed a sentence which required to be read a second time. This is in our estimation a primary and indis-

pensable character of a good style, especially in a philosophical and argumentative writer; and in this respect we would gladly recommend Priestley as a model to some noted, and not undeservedly eminent authors of our own time, who (with all their excellencies) may almost be thought to imagine that nothing can be profound which is not obscure and mystical.

Dr. Priestley's political opinions were such as might be expected from his education and habits as a dissenter, and from his enlarged and liberal turn of mind upon all subjects. In general, however, he does not seem to have been in the habit of devoting much of his time or thoughts to the political changes or party contests of the day. Even during the time of his residence with Lord Shelburne, his attention was mainly occupied by pursuits and studies more congenial, and in his estimation doubtless more important. He never allowed this connexion to interfere in the slightest degree with his personal independence, and in fact would seem to have studiously refrained at this period from taking any active or prominent part in public discussions. The allusions to subjects of this kind in his earlier publications are almost exclusively such as have a reference to the existing constitution of church and state, as affecting the social position of dissenters.

In 1780, Dr. Priestley's connexion with Lord Shelburne was amicably dissolved, for reasons which were never distinctly explained; but it is not improbable that the boldness with which he came forward as the champion of obnoxious opinions was unacceptable to his patron, though

a perfect freedom on these points had been mutually agreed upon. He took up his residence in the neighbourhood of Birmingham as a convenient situation for the prosecution of his chemical researches; and a vacancy occurring not long afterwards, he was invited to become one of the ministers of the New Meeting congregation at that place. Here he continued for nearly eleven years, in the active discharge of his duties as a christian minister in addition to his other diversified labours, which he pursued with unabated zeal and ardour. Not long after his settlement at Birmingham, he published one of his most remarkable and important theological works, his History of the Corruptions of Christianity. This publication, as is well known, involved him in a stormy sea of controversy in which churchmen and dissenters assailed him on all sides. We have not space to enter at length into the merits of these discussions; but we think that whoever pays them the very unusual compliment of perusing with equal fairness both sides of the debate, will be ready to admit that Dr. Priestley was superior to most, and decidedly defeated by none, of his numerous opponents; though it is not to be wondered at, that a work involving so much research, and such an extent and variety of reading, which would alone have been sufficient to occupy the undivided attention of most men for the greater part of their lives, should present frequent marks of haste and occasional oversights; sometimes of what would have weakened, but quite as often, of what might have strengthened his argument. These inaccuracies are however seized upon

without mercy, multiplied and exaggerated far beyond the truth, and represented as convicting him, not only of incompetency to investigate a subject of this kind, but of gross and wilful dissingenuity in reporting the results of his investigations, such as they were. To establish *this* point, and not the inaccuracy of his leading positions, is the object to which his most formidable antagonist, Dr., afterwards, Bishop Horsley, chiefly devoted himself, with a display of learning and ability worthy of a better cause, but sadly disgraced by the arrogant and overbearing insolence with which he attempts to browbeat his distinguished opponent. That both parties claimed the victory in this contest for their own champion, is only in the common order of things on such occasions.

About this period, Dr. Priestley wrote a short but very interesting sketch of his own life, down to the year 1787. At the conclusion of it he expresses high satisfaction in his then situation and employments, in which he trusted that the remainder of his life would be passed. But it pleased Providence to order it otherwise. The spirit of political and sectarian animosity, excited by the events and struggles of that period, was directed with more than ordinary bitterness against Dr. Priestley; and, the populace being at that time ranged on the side of intolerance and bigotry, its passions were at length worked up to the commission of dreadful excesses; the particulars of which are so well known, that it would be useless here to enter at length into the melancholy detail. It is enough to observe, not only that the rioters were

allowed to proceed without check from the local authorities, till property of *every description* became endangered, but that many circumstances afforded too much ground for the suspicion that the whole affair was directed by persons known to, and at least not discountenanced by, a still higher power. Dr. Priestley's house and library having been destroyed by an infuriated mob, and his own life placed in imminent danger, he was obliged to fly, for personal safety, to London; and, was soon afterwards invited to succeed his friend Dr. Price, at Hackney, where he remained for three years, still engaged with unwearied activity in all his favourite pursuits. It was however, obvious that party spirit was daily rising to a still higher degree of exasperation; and, after the treatment which Palmer and several other worthy men had experienced, he could not feel that he was any longer secure in his native land. He therefore determined to withdraw from it; and, at the same time, to bid adieu to the friends, whose society constituted his chief earthly happiness.

In America, the intimate friend of Franklin could not but be on the whole cordially received; but, there was as yet, no body of avowed Unitarian Christians in that country to whom he could unite himself, and the unpopularity of his religious opinions was almost, if not quite as great, as in England. He declined the chemical chair, which was offered him in the University of Pennsylvania, and chose rather to establish himself in a retired situation, far from any considerable town. In this secluded retreat, he passed the remainder of his days in tranquillity;

but, by no means, in that suspension from labour, to which many men who have spent their lives in active exertion are apt to think themselves entitled, in advancing years. Here, he published, besides many smaller tracts, two volumes of very valuable discourses on the Evidences of Revealed Religion, a Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos and other ancient nations, and the Continuation of his General History of the Christian Church, in four volumes. To within a few minutes of his death, he was busily engaged on his Notes on all the Books of Scripture, which were shortly afterwards published, in four volumes, along with his Comparison of the Doctrines of Heathen Philosophy with those of Revelation. The autobiography before mentioned, with a continuation to the time of his decease, by his son, Mr. Joseph Priestley, was also published, with an Appendix, containing a general view of his Philosophical works, by Mr., afterwards, Judge Cooper, and of his Theological works, by Mr. Christie.

The deeply interesting account with which this memoir concludes, of the last hours of Dr. Priestley's life, must be familiar to every one. It is, in fact, one of the most pleasing pictures on record, of the death-bed of a pious Christian, calmly falling asleep in Jesus, to the last moment of consciousness, under the practical influence of those convictions of Divine truth which it had been the great business of his life to impress, both on other minds and on his own. No one, it might be thought, could read this beautiful narrative, without having his faith

strengthened, his heart touched and edified. It is to be regretted, that our recollections of it should be mixed up with feelings of a less pleasing nature, when we also call to mind the captious eagerness with which one passage relating to the consolation to be derived from a belief in the limited duration of future punishments was seized upon, and perverted to a most obviously erroneous meaning.

This memoir was adopted by Mr. Rutt, as the basis of his own more extended biography, which is attached to his edition of Dr. Priestley's writings, and which derives the principal addition to its value, from the large collection of the author's letters to various correspondents, which he has been enabled to introduce. As might be expected, these letters, in many instances, throw a most pleasing and satisfactory light on the mental and moral character of the writer. This is more particularly true of the extracts, from his correspondence with Mr. Lindsey, after his removal to America; which uniformly indicate such a state of mind as is most characteristic of a Christian looking back on a life well and actively spent in the service of God and of mankind, earnestly desirous, to the best of his ability, to devote the short remnant to the same good cause, and anticipating the approaching close with the calm tranquillity of one who knew in whom he had believed. With him, as with his excellent and venerable friend, the thought of an hereafter was so habitually,—we might almost say *constantly*, present, as to form an integral part as it were of the constitution of his mind. Faith, it is true, was not li-

terally turned to sight; but it had passed into a state in which all doubt, all fear and hesitation had long since vanished, and the future was as it were realized before him. The time, we trust, is practically not far distant, when many good men, who in this world deplored what they believed to be his errors, and wept over his impending fate, shall rejoice to meet him in that better state, where much, that while here, they all viewed but as in a glass, darkly, will be fully and clearly unveiled.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

Turner, William,

The lives of eminent unitarians with a notice of dissenting academies

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